

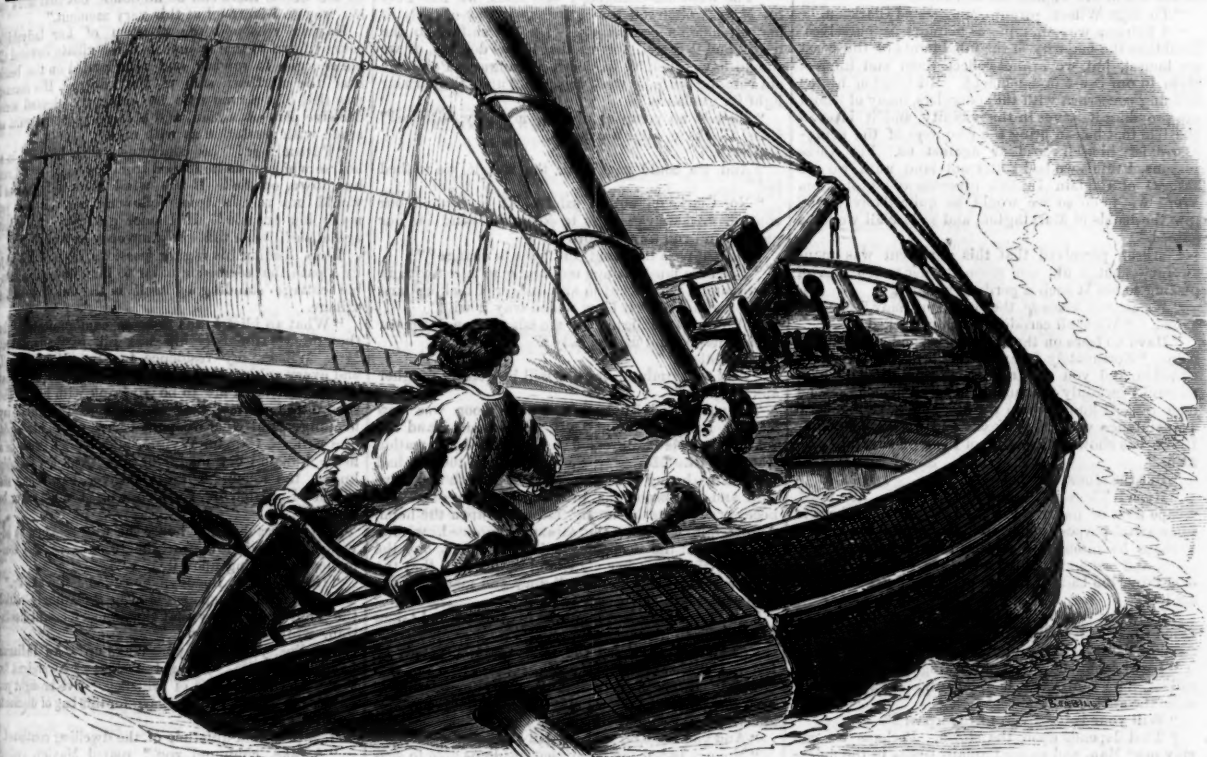
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[LADY RATHSMERE'S FLIGHT.]

THE MAID OF MONA.

By LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

HER LADYSHIP'S FLIGHT.

This is true courage, not the brutal force
Of vulgar heroes, but the firm resolve
Of virtue and of reason.

Whitehead's "Roman Father."

The flight of the Countess of Rathsmere in the sloop, was the result of one of those daring inspirations which frequently characterize her sex in moments of peril.

She had perceived, with womanly intuition, the existence of sinister designs beneath the specious exterior of Maxley, and had resolved, at an early stage of the interview, to take a sudden leave of him.

With a tact, born of the holy cause that occupied her, she had managed to extract from him the leading facts respecting Mona and himself, and to keep him unsuspecting of her intention.

In fact, she had completely deceived him, and he had gone ashore without the slightest suspicion of the sloop's destined flight.

No sooner now record what had followed. No sooner had the villain left the sloop, in the manner related, than her ladyship turned to her faithful attendant, and said:

"Well, Clarkson, he has left us!"

The maid had been too much frightened by Maxley, and had had too lively a sense of his villainous disposition, to at once accept the truth as stated by her mistress.

"Is your ladyship sure of it?" she asked. "He may be watching and waiting on the deck!"

"No, Clarkson. I heard him launching his boat. He has really gone!"

"Then a good riddance of him, say I, my lady," and she drew a long breath, the first free respiration in which she had indulged for half an hour. "I hope I shall never find his way back to us. I wish his boat 'ud sink, or a shark bite his head off, or a whale swallow

him! Does your ladyship really intend to go to Liverpool with him and give him the money?"

"No, Clarkson. If I were sure of rescuing my poor child through his aid, the money would be no consideration, but I have no faith in him. Did you notice his treacherous way of talking and acting? Did you mark his evil glances, and the villainous expression on his features?"

Oh, yes, my lady! he is bad—the same wicked man he was when he stole the poor child—and I'd no sooner trust him than I would a viper!"

"He is thoroughly wicked, no doubt. He has no intention of delivering my letter to Captain Leslie!"

"Not the slightest, my lady! I'd sooner think that he has gone to get a parcel of them murdering smugglers to come here and kill us! Did he really tell us true, my lady, about Fearmought?"

"I think he did," and her ladyship sighed deeply.

"He spoke quite freely to us, and I explain his frankness on the ground that he did not intend to lose sight of us. I feel that most of his statements are true, and it must be, therefore, that my poor child is in the power of the smuggler-chief, harrowing as the conviction is to me!"

"It's perfectly awful, my lady. I do hope and pray that we may save 'er!"

"We shall—we must—after these discoveries," murmured her ladyship, controlling her emotion, although her voice quivered. "The hope that has sustained me during all these years is not a mockery, but a blessed truth. My darling still lives, and I shall again see her—again feel her gentle form nestling on my bosom! The little hands I have so often seen in dreams extended to me! the prattling voice! the soft curls clustering on the pure forehead! the laughing eyes filled with the light of heaven! the tiny footsteps scattered up and down the sands on a distant shore! all, all the haunting pictures of my life have been realities! O, my darling! my darling!"

For a moment the utterance of her ladyship was choked by a flood of tender love and yearning for her lost daughter.

"We must save her," said Clarkson, sobbing at the remembrances of the lost one that came thronging

upon her. "I shall never forget how sweet and pretty she looked the last time I saw her on that awful night when the villain took her! But what shall we do, my lady?"

"Our first step is to rid ourselves of Markington. This done, we shall have a basis of facts on which to proceed further. We have learned that Markington has been living many years at Port St. Mary, under the name of Maxley. My darling is called Mona. She has been befriended by a good and motherly woman, named Mrs. Wilson. She is good and beautiful, and so unlike our cruel enemy that he cannot endure her presence. She has a friend, or lover, in Captain Wynne, of the revenue service, the very gentleman I have been thinking of enlisting in the search for her. All these facts are of the utmost importance!"

"Yes, my lady, if we can only escape from this wicked Markington."

"We will escape from him," declared the countess, while her form seemed to expand with her heroic resolve. "I will see Captain Wynne, visit Mrs. Wilson, offer rewards, and enter upon the most active search possible. I will spend thousands of pounds, if necessary, and make my cause the cause of every honest and virtuous heart in the Kingdom. I have been acting with a purpose ever since I wrote my letter to Captain Leslie!"

"Oh, is there any hope for us, my lady?" cried Clarkson, with brightening features, as she started to her feet, unmindful of the pitching of the sloop. "Will your ladyship really make an effort to escape from him?"

"I certainly shall, Clarkson. I see my way clear, now that he has left us. He will probably be absent half an hour or more, under pretence of finding a person to take the letter to its destination. This time we must use to good advantage. He must see no more of us!"

"But there's no boat, my lady," objected Clarkson. "He's gone ashore in it. How can we leave the vessel?"

"We will not leave it. We will take it away with us!"

Clarkson looked dismayed at this intelligence.



"We shall certainly be drowned," she ejaculated. "Only hear how the wind roars! See how we are pitching about, although we are in the harbour! Can't we run the sloop aground on the beach, my lady, and so escape from it?"

"We could do so, but we would, in all probability, be seen by Markington. Besides, what can we do ashore, particularly at this hour? It is not likely that Captain Leslie will enter port before daylight, and it is even possible that the storm will keep him away for days together. Under these circumstances, to whom on the island can we look for assistance?"

"To Mrs. Wilson, perhaps," suggested Clarkson.

"A helpless woman, quite as helpless as ourselves. Doubtless the majority of the inhabitants of the coast are honest, but we cannot collect them and interest them in our cause in a moment. Markington hinted at being concerned with the smugglers, many of whom are prowling in secret in the vicinity, and it is even possible that he can bring the resources of the smuggler-chief himself to bear against us. For these reasons, I think we had better not land until we are assured of Captain Leslie's presence and protection. Were we to do so we would be quite likely to fall into the hands of Markington, and so lose all we have gained."

Clarkson perceived that this argument was unanswerable, but it did not reconcile her to the idea of putting to sea at such a perilous moment.

"We cannot manage the sloop, my lady," she declared. "We shall certainly be shipwrecked!"

"Have no fears on that score," responded her ladyship. "Fortunately I have the skill necessary for the occasion, and you the necessary strength. Two of us ought certainly to manage the sloop as well as one man can. I know where we are, and have a general acquaintance with these coasts and waters. Captain Leslie has shown me a chart of them on several occasions."

"But the storm, my lady——!"

"Hush! There is not a minute to lose. We must escape now or never. I feel—I know that there is some awful purpose underlying Markington's conduct. Perhaps he intends to imprison us in some lonely place, and make me pay an immense ransom. There is nothing too bad for him to do. We must fly or we are lost!"

"But how can we manage the sloop, my lady?" asked Clarkson, continuing her objections, with the freedom of an old and indulgent servant.

"I will soon show you. Markington has left the sail set, for I can hear it flapping, and we have only to raise the anchor!"

"Will your ladyship go to Liverpool?"

"That depends upon the storm. Perhaps we can stay near Man, and so see Captain Leslie in the morning. Perhaps the wind will drive us to England. But we shall be better off anywhere else than here, and we will go. Come!"

"Well, I suppose we can die but once, my lady," sighed Clarkson, with an air of desperate resignation. "And we may as well be drowned as fall into the hands of Markington or Fearnought!"

Strengthening her soul with this last reflection, the maid followed her mistress to the deck.

The first fact that the countess noticed was that the wind had increased greatly since she left Port St. Mary. The mist, too, had thickened to such an extent that the harbour light was barely visible, shining dimly through the intense darkness.

"Oh, my lady!" exclaimed Clarkson, in dismay, as the rude blast struck her. "We shall be blown overboard!"

"Hush! The darkness will conceal us from Markington, and the storm prevent him from hearing what we are doing. Take my hand and I will guide you. Our first task is to raise the anchor!"

Her ladyship led the way forward, sustaining herself and her maid against the pitching of the sloop by clinging to the bulwarks and rigging. With her skill and experience, assisted by Clarkson, she had little difficulty in raising the anchor, although the task was slow one, and occasioned some noise.

"We are moving, my lady," cried Clarkson, as soon as the anchor, breaking ground, allowed the sloop to drift away to the leeward. "We shall go ashore upon the east side of the bay, and be dashed to pieces!"

The countess uttered a stern injunction of silence, for she felt that there was no time to waste in words, in the presence of the perils of the movement she had undertaken.

"Up with it!" she commanded. "We must be prompt!"

They toiled resolutely together.

By the time the anchor was clear, the sloop had drifted dangerously to the leeward, the bay being only a mile wide, but the harbour light revealed both her whereabouts and the course necessary to be followed. Placing herself at the helm, and continuing to avail herself of Clarkson's strength, her ladyship brought

the little craft to the required course, and she was soon sweeping down the bay at a rate of speed that was terrific.

"This is a swift adieu to Markington," exclaimed her ladyship, her voice expressing a profound joy at escaping from him. "Our flight is a success!"

The sloop soon began to pass beyond the shelter of the shore, and the force of the wind and waves became truly terrible, filling the heart of Clarkson with terror and gloomy forebodings, which she uttered in most dolorous strains.

"The wind has changed, I see, since we left Port St. Mary," observed the countess, by way of reply to her attendant's complaints. "It has shifted to the north, and it is well for us that it has done so, or we should have difficulty in clearing Langness Point. I am running south by west, depending upon the harbour light for guidance."

"There's no compass aboard, my lady, is there?" asked Clarkson, after a pause.

"None."

"And we could not lower the sail, if we wished to?"

"No, Clarkson, not in safety. It is beyond our control. All we can do is to keep the wind on our quarter and run away before it."

"But suppose the wind continues to change?"

"Then we must change our course to agree with it. Fortunately, we are not in any danger of making land before daylight, let it blow which way it will."

"Will not the lights on the island soon disappear in the mist behind us, my lady?"

"Doubtless."

"And every minute the sea will be getting rougher and rougher!"

The countess did not reply, for the sloop was now leaving Langness Point on her lee-quarter, and the roar of the gale had become so loud that conversation was difficult. Moreover, the pressure on the sail had become so heavy that the strength of both her ladyship and Clarkson was greatly taxed to exert the necessary counterbalancing influence upon the helm. A few minutes later the attendant noticed, with a shudder, that the deepening mists had shut out the lights of Man from her view, and it was then that the fugitives experienced the full fury and motion of the tempest.

The storm-king had mounted his throne, and taken their fate into his keeping.

"Shall we ever see the land again, my lady?" faltered Clarkson.

"Only He knoweth! But so many mercies have been our portion that we may hope for their continuance. I feel able to manage the vessel."

"And you have no fear, my lady?"

"None. Is not the hand that made us able to sustain us? Besides, we are beyond the power of our enemy, and on our way to the rescue of my lost darling."

Fearless and hopeful, with a countenance placid with her trust in heaven, and with a heart full of tender thoughts of Mona, her ladyship continued to govern the helm, occasionally addressing an encouraging remark to her attendant. And away flew the sloop, a lone atom in the midst of warring immensities, with her mast bending under the reefed sail, and her bow crunching the waters with a force resembling conscious fury. On, on she sped! with the strange spectacle on her deck of two female figures toiling at the helm—one half-crouching, in an attitude of apprehension, particularly when the waves broke over the sloop; and the other standing calmly erect, with a love and a faith that had raised her glorious soul above the dominions of the darkness and tempest!

CHAPTER XIX.

MAXLEY'S PURSUIT.

Now, by the ground that I am banish'd from,
Well could I curse away a winter's night,
Though standing naked on a mountain top,
Where biting cold would never let grass grow.

Shakespeare.

The disappearance of his intended victim took Maxley so entirely by surprise that he could not readily receive the evidence of his senses.

The storm, the difficulty of managing the sloop, her ladyship's apparent dependence upon his services, and the other circumstances of the place and the hour, had very naturally precluded all suspicion of such an occurrence.

It was hard, therefore, for him to realize that the countess had completely turned the tables upon him, making his supposed astuteness in going ashore with her letter the very occasion of his discomfiture.

The fact of her flight, however, could not long be denied, and withering was the rage and mortification with which it was finally accepted by him.

"Fool that I am!" he howled, in a state of mind bordering upon frenzy. "I might have known it! Where will she go?"

He reflected a moment, rowing towards the village, and then ejaculated:

"To Liverpool, of course! She does not expect Captain Leslie to land before morning, and would not know to whom to apply for assistance. She is aware that I have friends hereabouts, and would be afraid of stumbling upon one of them, and so finding her way back to my keeping. Besides, I gave her a hint about Fearnought and the smugglers. Another thing, it would not be easy for her to enter one of our ports in this darkness, with such a gale blowing. And as for the whole, there can be no doubt but that she's on her way to Liverpool at this very moment."

Having reasoned the problem of her ladyship's course down to this conclusion, the villain devoted all his energies to rowing, and soon landed on the beach near the northern side of the village. His manner was that of a person who has promptly adopted some decisive plan of action, and his eyes gleamed quite as much with resolution as with rage.

"Pursue her!" he commended with himself, in a hoarse whisper, as he leaped from his boat. "I'll run her down, or die! If the wind blew a hurricane I would not refrain from following her. I will make her trouble! If I once get my eyes on her again, she'll wish that she'd never been born."

Thus feeding his raging passions, he took his way by a path that seemed familiar to him, towards a humble cottage standing by itself in the outskirts of the village.

"What an idiot I was to be so communicative," he thought. "Her ladyship has full particulars about Mrs. Wilson, my residence in Man, Mona herself, and every subject that came under discussion. What demon possessed me to be so frank with her? The thought, of course, that she was to remain in my keeping. But what weapons I have put in her hands! She will see Captain Wynne, and there'll soon be a fierce hue and cry made for me. Ah, her ladyship knows too much. I must recover her before she reaches England, or I am ruined. I must eat or be eaten."

Having reached the house he was seeking, he advanced to a window near the front steps, and commenced pounding upon it.

"Halloa, there, Boodey," he called. "Wake up. There was no response, and he accordingly rattled the window in a way that threatened its swift dissolution, while he shouted:

"Halloa, you, Boodey! Wake up! An Indian has come ashore. I've got a chest of sovereigns for you. Here's a dozen of whiskey. I've brought you a cask of tobacco. Look sharp for this bag of diamonds and watches."

The profound quietude of the dwelling continued.

"Awake, confound you," roared Maxley, getting impatient. "Your house is a-fire. Your granmother is dead. A smuggler has murdered your uncle, and——"

He paused, hearing signs of life within, first a gruff voice, and then the movements of some person in the dwelling. The next instant the window in question was opened, and the barrel of an old musket was levelled towards Maxley, while a hoarse voice demanded:

"What's that you're saying about smugglers? I knew those midnight prowlers were thick as herrings hereabouts; but I didn't know afore that they're round pulling honest people out o' bed at this hour o' the morning. Hoy, there, look out, and let's know your business."

"Hold on, Boodey," said Maxley, with some nervousness. "Take away that gun. It's me—Nate Maxley."

The gun was drawn in and a head was thrust out while the voice belonging to the owner of the house responded:

"Oh, it's you, Nate. Where did you come from? What're you doing?"

"I'm looking for my sloop. Some of these confounded smugglers have run off with her."

"No; it can't be possible!"

"Yes—she's gone. The thieves have an hour's start, and are well on their way to England. I came along the shore looking for her, not supposing any thing so serious. What I want of you is to borrow your sloop to go in pursuit."

"The weather's rough, aint it?"

"Rather fresh; but you need have no fears for your boat. I shan't be gone long, and will take good care of her."

"Well, you can have her, of course. You'll find her anchored off the light with the rest. Don't run foul of any of the rest while getting up your anchor."

"I'll look out for that. Are there any provisions aboard of her?"

"A plenty—such as they are. I never like to take a cruise, you see, even a short one, without having something to eat and drink in the locker, just by way of precaution."

"That was my impression. How shall I know your boat from the others?"

"Why the name's aster—*the Star Fish*—and you'll find a plenty of my duds in the cabin, clothes with my name on 'em, and all that sort o' thing. You'll also find candles and lanterns, and almost anything else needed. Is that all?"

"Yes. I am much obliged to you. I'll do as much for you some day. Good night!"

"Good night, Nato."

Boodey withdrew his head and shut his window, while Maxley hurried away towards the beach, rejoicing at his success in borrowing a sloop for the pursuit. Arriving at the spot where he had left his boat, he pushed it off and sprang into it, rowing towards a little fleet of fishing vessels anchored in front of the village.

They lay in such darkness that they were invisible at the distance of a few rods.

"I ought to have asked him further about his boat's position," Maxley ejaculated. "Here goes, however, for the one that is nearest."

He rowed alongside of the sloop he had selected, and climbed upon the deck, fastening his boat to the mainmast. He next entered the cabin, where he groped about in the darkness, feeling for materials to strike a light. He was entirely familiar with the internal arrangements of these fishing-craft, but he did not immediately find what he wanted.

"I see that I am on Boodey's boat," he soon muttered, in a tone of grim sarcasm. "I recognize it by the smell of whiskey, and by the utter confusion of everything in the cabin. Now, where are they candles? In his boots, in his bed, or where?"

He continued to fumble about, growling at the delay, but at length he found the objects wanted, produced a light, and looked about him.

The signs of ownership he had enumerated were at once verified, for the sloop belonged to Boodey.

"Well, here are provisions," the explorer muttered, surveying the sloop's stores, "whiskey and herrings, and then herrings and whiskey, and then more whiskey and more herrings! Also some sea-biscuits, an oilskin jacket, and a cask of water; likewise some corned beef and other luxuries. Furthermore, some coffee and pickles. All this as a precaution against being driven off to sea without anything to eat. To help by the smell," he added, sniffing at the articles before him, "these stores are relics of the primeval world, an actual residue of those taken into the ark by Noah. They'll do, however. Perhaps they do not date back beyond Boodey's great-grandfather!"

He closed the sloop's locker, extinguished the light, and hastened on deck, where his stern and savage mood returned to him. His first step towards getting under way was to take his boat aboard, and his next to note the position of the sloop with respect to the others, to the wind, and to the course to be taken in leaving the harbour. Fortunately for his purpose, she was in a position to reach the open sea without running foul of the other vessels.

"That's all right," he thought. "Now, what sail shall I carry? The breeze does not seem threatening, and I'll better be liberal with my canvas, if I mean to overtake her ladyship before she reaches Liverpool. I'll let her jib alone, for the present, and set the main-sail, without reefs. The job must be done here, in the shelter of the land, to save trouble."

He applied himself diligently to the work in hand. It was no easy task for him to raise the sail, but at length, having the assistance of a winch, he accomplished this task. He next raised the anchor, and the little craft drifting away swiftly, as the Jolly Herring had done under the management of the countess. He then set his sail, placed himself at the helm, and brought the sloop into position, dashing away on his course.

And now his pursuit of the countess was fairly begun. "You'll have to show your heels, my lady," he muttered, with a coarse laugh, as he felt how powerfully the sail was drawing. "If you reach Liverpool before I overhaul you, you will be decidedly lucky!"

For a few minutes he continued his rejoicings at being alone, and appeared quite contented with himself and with his prospects. By the time, however, that he was well beyond the shelter of the island, the breeze had freshened so much as to remind him that he was in some peril.

The sloop he had borrowed was about the size of his own, but she was somewhat different in build, being older, broader at the bows, and consequently a slower sailer. To remedy this last defect, her sail was larger than that carried by the Jolly Herring and other craft of her class, and it was not long before Maxley perceived that he had to do with a sloop quite different from the one to which he was accustomed, and not only sailing heavily through the water, but her immense sail, on account of this resistance, sub-

jecting her mast to a greater pressure than was prudent.

"I don't know but the old tub 'll be the death of me!" Maxley at length ejaculated, after he had carefully noted the strength of the breeze, the labouring of the sloop, and the straining of the mast. "If I don't carry all the sail possible, however, I shan't overtake her ladyship, and that is a failure out of the question. On the whole, Dog Fish or Bulldog, whatever they call you, you must take me over the waters at full speed, or find your way beneath them! There's no medium course about it!"

Setting his lips hard together with an air of dogged resolution, the resolute villain braced himself against the helm, and gave all his energies to the management of the sloop, at the same time cherishing the grim ideas of vengeance, and villainous satisfaction thronging upon him.

He felt that he was following closely on the track of the fugitive countess and he had sworn to retake her.

"No fear, no heaving to, no slackening of a thread of canvas," he shouted exultingly, inflamed with wild hopes of success. "There shall be no sleep nor rest for me, my lady, until I again see you!"

And thus, at that wild hour, the two vessels of the countess and Maxley were both exposed to the tempest—one manned by Guilt, seeking to commit further wickedness, and the other by Virtue, seeking to do good!

Let us see what strange dealings under these relations Providence had in store for them!

CHAPTER XX.

THE STORM AND THE WRECK.

A wreck complete she rolled

At mercy of the waves.

Dryden.

A rotten carcass of a boat, not rigged,
Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats
Instinctively had quit it.

Shakespeare.

ONLY those who have seen the ocean in its wrath can imagine the scene spread around Maxley, as his sloop drove on before the tempest.

The wind was in the right direction for his voyage, blowing on his quarter, but it was already far too rough for his comfort or safety, and was every instant increasing.

Loud wailed the elements in their tremendous conflict, roar calling unto roar, while the swashing of the waves against the sloop blended with the shrill whistle of the wind in her rigging.

Utter darkness prevailed upon the face of the deep, as in the world's primeval morning, save that a dull glare was evolved from the concussion of the waters.

On, on sped the frail craft, now rushing along the crests of the flying billows, and now sinking into abysses, whose depths seemed to forbid that she should ever rise from them.

Grim and dark, a being in unison with the night, Maxley continued to stand at the helm, guiding the sloop onwards, and revolving his dark projects.

The gale finally reached a height that had not been known in the Irish Sea for years.

The sloop laboured more and more heavily.

Every timber in her seemed to be writhing in mortal convulsions.

The manner of the lone navigator became anxious, and another hour of accumulating dangers caused him to experience an actual apprehension of evil.

To reveal the source of the predicament into which he had fallen, let it be said that the gale had greatly exceeded the limits he had at first assigned it.

It had now reached such a degree of fury that it was as dangerous for him to attempt to lie to, as to hold to his wild flight before it.

The groaning of the strained mast and hull had become startling to him.

He complained to himself that he had been foolish in omitting to take a reef in his sail before starting.

As he had previously wondered why he did not foresee the flight of the countess, so he now wondered that he had not foreseen the violence of the tempest.

He ventured, however, to hope that the worst of the storm was over, and resolved to continue his course.

He fortified this resolution by reflecting anew how desirable it was that he should overtake the countess.

But at this moment—perhaps the very one that saw the culmination of the gale—a sudden blast struck the sloop, a tremendous crash followed, and the mast and sail, torn bodily from the sloop, were hurled far away to the leeward!

The curses with which Maxley greeted this event will not bear repetition.

He saw at a glance what would follow!

His search for the countess would be interrupted!

Dismantled, her headway lost, the naked hull tossed helplessly on the waters, drenched from one end to

the other by each of the fast succeeding waves that overtook her.

Wave after wave broke over her deck, and the boat Maxley had taken aboard was at length swept away to destruction.

At times it was about all that Maxley could do to prevent himself from being washed away from her.

His only comfort under these circumstances was the thought that morning must be near.

With what impatience he waited for it!

As if its fury had been slackened by the injury it had done him, the storm began to abate, and it soon diminished to an ordinary breeze.

With this change in the wind, the waves began to decrease in size and violence.

These changes caused Maxley about as much pain as pleasure, for they provoked a continual wish that they had come sooner.

Morning at length dawned upon the scene, a bright and pleasant morning, that charmed by contrast with the night.

The air, but lately so full of mists, was soft and balmy, and nature, as is always the case after a storm, seemed to have put on a new robe of beauty.

The sky was serene, and the sun, dimly veiled by rosy clouds, shone with a warm and cheering light.

A large number of sea birds were sporting along the surface of the deep, and calling to one another, as if rejoicing at the return of fine weather.

The waves had so far subsided that they broke over the deck only occasionally, and even then not so violently as to cause Maxley any trouble.

Haggard with his sleeplessness and toil, the disappointed villain availed himself of the first beams of daylight to note the particulars of his situation.

The mast had been broken short off at the deck, and in falling everboard had carried away the bowsprit, so that she was utterly helpless.

A few fragments of the shrouds were clinging to the wreck, and a large part of the bulwarks was still intact, but in other respects the deck seemed to have been swept by the besom of destruction.

Not a sail was in sight—not a craft of any description.

"A pleasant state of things, truly!" exclaimed Maxley, after a long and bitter contemplation of the scene around him. "There isn't much chance here to get up a juryman. There isn't a yard of canvas remaining, nor a piece of wood larger than an oar; and I doubt that there's even that much!"

He scanned the horizon earnestly, under favour of the increased light, but saw nothing that soothed his troubled spirit.

"Here I am," he resumed, with additional bitterness, "drifting helplessly about, like a frog on a chip. While the wind remains north-west, I shall drift on towards Liverpool. When it changes, I shall drift away in some other direction. A fine prospect, truly!"

He finished with a sort of howl of vexation, and remained motionless and silent several minutes.

"This ends my attempt to seize the countess," he finally continued. "If I should see her, I am in no condition to pursue her. On the contrary," he added, starting nervously, "is she not in a position to secure me, if she should chance to find me? It would be more odd than pleasant if my attempt to overtake her should cause me to be overtaken!"

He commenced pacing to and fro, as evenly as the rolling and pitching of the sloop would permit, and considered the circumstances and probabilities of his situation, endeavouring to think of some step for the bettering of his condition.

"Now, suppose I am picked up by a passing vessel," he thought, "and taken to Man or to England, is it not clear that I shall be too late, at the best, to prevent the countess from exposing my history and conduct? Am I not likely to be picked up just in time to be recognized, denounced, and marked off to summary punishment? Well, let what will come, I may as well make a breakfast of Boodey's biscuits and herrings, and be thankful that I am not in any immediate danger of starving!"

He took his way to the cabin, which he found in an unpleasant condition, the water having entered it in considerable quantities during the morning. He secured, however, a sufficiency of the provisions he had mentioned, and refreshed himself with a drink of whiskey-and-water.

He then returned to the deck.

Seating himself on the cover of the hatchway, he cherished the disappointment and bitterness he felt at being unable to pursue the countess, and devoted a good portion of his time to looking out for a vessel.

A couple of hours thus passed.

At length, when the waves had become still, comparatively speaking, the attention of Maxley was drawn to a circumstance their motion had before prevented him from remarking—a pitching of the sloop at variance with the state of the weather.

This motion consisted of a heavy plunge forward

and a corresponding stagger backwards—the motion, in fact, of a ship filling with water!

He started to his feet with a cry of terror, a terrible truth bursting upon his senses.

The sloop was about to founder!

For the space of half a minute, while the water in the hold vibrated back and forth beneath his feet, the startled villain held his breath, marking the tremulous shocks those vibrations gave the vessel.

His next step was to scan the horizon closely, in the hope of discovering a sail.

The rays of the sun had lighted up the surface of the ocean clearly, but they revealed nothing to him, nothing save the yawning immensity of waters around him.

"She's surely sinking!" he ejaculated. "She may go down with me in ten minutes, and I have no boat, no spar, not even a water-barrel, with which to make my escape from her!"

He hurried to the little fore-castle in quest of something with which to meet the emergency coming upon him. The only objects he found were some pieces of board, which had formed the bottom of a bunk, and the blade of a broken oar, and with these, after vain efforts to detach others, he returned to the deck.

The sloop had settled perceptibly.

It was evident that the leak, less noticeable at first, had been enlarged by the weight of the water that had been admitted.

A sort of hopelessness came over Maxley as he hurriedly searched the cabin for other pieces of timber, with the hope of forming a raft.

Wrenching a box or two to pieces, and clutching desperately at the frame-work of one or two bunks, he managed to add a few fragments of board to his previous collection, and commenced lashing them together. The whole formed a float that might be of some service, but it was not large enough to allow him to take away any provisions upon it, or to save him from immersing himself to his neck in the water.

"And this is to be the end of my schemes!" he cried, trembling with terror, as he dragged his float astern and added another lashing to it. "I shall die like a baited wolf!"

The plunging of the sloop had now become fearful to his sight and feeling, for it seemed, at each vibration of the water in the hold, that the quivering hull would be hurled to the bottom of the sea.

A strange series of squeaking sounds were now heard in the cabin and hold, followed by the rush of light forms, and the trampling of many tiny feet.

What could it mean?

The next instant about a score of rats, some of them of large size, came scrambling out of the fore-castle and cabin, panting and excited, and congregated amidstships.

They had evidently been drowned out of their haunts below by the intrusive water.

Scattering in different directions, after a moment of consultation, as it appeared to Maxley, they rushed to the sides of the vessel, and crept along the bulwarks, with actions and cries which showed how anxious they were to quit the foundering craft.

Finding their flight cut off, they re-assembled amidstships, and seemed to hold another consultation, putting their sharp noses together and squeaking in the most dismal manner, while their small eyes glared around with a desperation that seemed conscious.

With that instinct which invariably causes this animal to turn upon man, when imperilled or cornered, the desperate horde suddenly rushed towards Maxley, uttering cries of rage and terror, and showing that they instinctively regarded him as their enemy, and as the author of the perils threatening their destruction.

A horrible light flashed upon Maxley's soul, as his tiny foes thus rushed in a mass to assault him.

"Heavens and earth!" he shouted, his excitement reviving a long-suppressed exclamation, "they're fierce as tigers! They'll gnaw the flesh from my bones! They'll swim off with my float, when the sloop goes down, and eat me alive!"

While uttering these cries, he wielded his fragment of oar, which he had promptly seized upon with all the fury of desperation.

How fiercely and terribly they swarmed upon him! They fastened to his boots, ran up his legs, leaped upon his arms, continuing their cries, and fastened their sharp teeth in his flesh repeatedly, despite all his efforts to keep them at a distance.

No sooner did he send one spinning across the deck, or dislodge another from his person, than their places were filled by eager companions.

This fearful fight continued several minutes.

The emotions of Maxley during its continuance were full of apprehension and horror.

At length the rats beat a retreat to the fore-castle, as if to make one effort more to escape in that quarter, and the excited and horrified man had a moment of respite from their furious assaults.

"Now is my time!" he shouted, panting and

terror-stricken, as he seized his float. "They'll be the death of me if they again get at me!"

The sloop had descended still lower into the water, and it now staggered like a drunken man falling upon his knees. It was clear that she must soon sink, and easy to foresee that the rats would dispute the possession of his float with him.

Springing to the taffrail, he was about to throw the float into the water, when his eyes suddenly rested upon a sail which had been some time visible, but which he had been too excited to notice. It was approaching him, and not very far distant!

At this sight the desperate man set up a prolonged cry of joy.

"A sail! a sail!" he shouted, dancing about in a joyous excitement that resembled delirium. "A sloop! a reefed mainsail! apparently a fisherman! She will see me! I must raise a signal of distress!"

He drew forth a handkerchief, and hastily attached it to his fragment of oar, waving it wildly above his head.

"Help! help!" he shouted, forgetting that his voice could not be heard at half or quarter the distance of the approaching vessel. "Save me! The wreck is sinking beneath me! God have mercy! Help! help!"

(To be continued.)

THE PILLOW OF ROSES.

CHAPTER I.

She was a queen—and to this thought did yield

The very essence of her being up.

Guarded her heart as with a golden shield

Till love came sparkling in her life's full cup,

Which, like a brimming goblet rich with wine,

She dashed to atoms on the world's broad shrine.

"Will you leave me thus?"

"I dare not stay longer," said the royal girl, to whom these words were spoken, lifting her finger toward the palace window, and moving forward; "see, the reception-room is already lighted—a few moments and I shall be summoned to join the queen. Do not attempt to detain me."

"One word," pleaded the deep, manly voice which had first spoken, and a cavalier followed her out from the shadow of a large tulip-tree, beneath which they had been conversing, and a fine figure, richly arrayed in a court dress, stood revealed in the moonlight; "give me but one word of hope, a single promise that you will struggle against the destiny which they are urging upon you!"

"Alas! what can I promise—what hope?" replied the young girl, folding her arms despondingly in the moonlight; "how can I, single handed, contend against the majesties of France? how break the plighted faith of my own kingdom—baffle the ambitious projects of my Uncle Guise—and, above all, wrong the heart of one who already looks upon me as his wife, and who loves me but too, too well?"

"But not as I love you, with this mighty strength of passion and judgment—not with his whole being, and with a sense that thrills every nerve as with strange music, and tinges each thought with a ray of your own young beauty. Ah, no! my sweet Mary, this effeminate Dauphin never dreamed of the intense passion which swells through and floods my whole being. Nor do you love him, Mary. The queen might forget the dignity of mere station, even for a subject. But the woman who is regal of mind, and feminine by nature, must look upward for the object of her love."

The young man unconsciously drew himself up as he spoke, and his eyes flashed proudly in the moonlight. And Queen Mary of Scotland—the poetry of her young being was all awake, her bosom heaved, she felt the light spring to her eyes, and sparkle through the tears that shone there; a blissful light broke from her heart, and, turning away her head, she murmured:

"Alas! it is all true. I cannot love the Dauphin!"

"Do you love me?" said the young noble, taking both her hands in his, and bending his eyes pleadingly on her face. The proud fire had left them, and an expression was there, humble, but eloquent with tenderness. The question might have sounded abruptly to the royal girl, but for the low and almost feminine tones in which it was spoken.

Mary felt the blood swell up to her cheek and brow, but her warm, true heart prompted the answer, "As my own life!" she murmured, and with an impulse half shame, half tenderness, her face drooped forward, and rested on the hands which still clasped her own, and so near was it to the bosom of the impassioned suitor, that the prodigal curls which fell over it sunk in glossy masses on his embroidered vest. The noble disengaged his right hand, and drew her closer to him.

"Then shall we not be happy?" he questioned, in a voice that was low but rich with joyful feeling. "Let us leave this land, with its heartless court and hollow

pomp. Believe me, this foreign match is hateful to the Scottish nation. There is not a true subject of your realm who would not fling up his cap in triumph, could he see his queen the bride of a true born Scot. The people of your realm feel that their sovereign is almost a foreigner in heart. Wed the Dauphin, and the alienation which a residence here has created will be complete. They know that Mary Stuart will be more the subject of France than a Queen of Scotland."

"Hark!" said the young queen, starting from the arm that held her, and yet nestling close to his side, "did you not hear a rustling sound?"

"It was but a nightingale trying his wing in the moonlight," replied the young man.

"Nay, there goes a shadow," exclaimed Mary, "yonder, behind the Queen's Walk. Heaven grant that no one has overheard us. Good night—nay, do not detain me another moment."

"It was but the shadow of a bough swayed by the wind," he answered; "dearest we are alone."

But the terrified girl was not to be appeased. She trembled so violently, that his arm could scarcely support her.

"It was the queen—it was Catherine de Medicis," she said, "none else would be in that spot at such an hour."

"Nay, this is a mere conjecture," said the youth, still attempting to re-assure her, "and to convince you of it—see! there is the queen by her dressing-room window. Her hand has this moment flung back the drapery, and she seems to be looking forth on the moonlit garden."

Mary looked up and drew a deep breath, for she could not be mistaken in the person of Catherine de Medicis, who stood at the window opposite; the room was lighted brilliantly within, and a strong sunshine could not have revealed her superb figure to better effect. She was forcing back the volumes of rich drapery that fell over the window with her right hand and her head was turned, as if speaking to some one within the chamber. The light fell with a soft glow on her vestments of purple velvet, and Mary could see, by the jewels that sparkled amid her hair and turned around the graceful curve of her neck, that Catherine was already arrayed for the festival, which was to be given that night in honour of her own birth-day. As she gazed, another figure appeared at the window, that of a fair girl, shorter by far than the queen, and with a profusion of ringlets from which the fresh rose-buds seemed dropping over her person. Her face, brilliant and beautiful, was lifted towards Catherine, and she seemed to be speaking low, but with great eagerness, for the queen bent her head as if to listen. After a moment, Catherine, turned her face to the window, and looked keenly out, while her companion lifted her ungloved arm and pointed toward the tulip tree.

"Let us fall back into the shadow!" said the young nobleman, and he drew the trembling girl hastily toward the tree which they had left but a few paces. When he looked up again, Catherine de Medicis was gently shaking her head, as if in disbelief of something which the young girl had urged upon her, and carelessly dropping her arm, she allowed the drapery to sweep over the window again.

"I shall be missed! in ten minutes I shall be missed!" said Mary, almost breathless with apprehension, and darting from the side of her companion she hurried toward the palace.

He sprung after her.

"Come back, I beseech you," he said, "not now, but after the festival—before you rest, come hither; I shall be waiting; and at that hour no one will think of the garden. Let us converse—let us decide on the future."

"I will come," said Mary, "but not another word—I am half dead with terror already."

And drawing her hand away, she hurried along the shadowy side of a gravel walk, and entered the palace by a private door.

The young Queen of Scots entered her dressing-room.

No one was there save the two waiting women, who stood by the toilet. The wax lights were half burnt out in the silver candelabra that stood before the mirror, and the women seemed restless with the long and fruitless attendance.

A little ebony clock, chased and inlaid with gold, stood in the corner of the room. Mary cast her eyes on the dial, and started to see how late it was.

Hastily flinging herself in a chair, she shook her already half-loosened tresses over her panting bosom, and desired her attendants to make haste in arranging them.

But the women were sullen, and little inclined to disturb the dignity of a royal toilet with too much haste.

Five minutes were exhausted in smoothing the rich mass of ringlets back from her fair forehead—another five, and Catherine de Medicis would expect her to

join the royal circle before they entered the reception room.

Mary started to her feet, and gathering the whole wealth of her tresses in both hands, gave them one twist, and thrusting a diamond bodkin through the knot thus formed, allowed the bright mass to fall in beautiful profusion over her shoulders.

With one hasty glance in the mirror, one pass of her small hand over the glossy curve of her head, she called for her bodice.

It was of azure velvet, and even in her anxiety and haste, that small mouth dimpled to the remembrance that it was his favourite colour.

With her own hands she threaded the silken cord over her still panting bust, while one of her women smoothed the rich and silvery folds of her skirt, and the other was upon her knees fitting the silken slippers to each fairy foot, as his fellow beat restlessly against the ottoman with impatience at the least delay.

"No jewels—no ornaments to-night," she said, hastily putting aside the casket which her women presented; "well, well—rather than see that crestfallen look, clasp that one string of pearls to my neck, Beatrice. That will do."

With a light step, but still disordered manner, Mary left the room, and, followed by her attendant, timidly entered the chamber where she had, a few minutes before, seen Catherine de Medicis. That remarkable woman was sitting near the window. She might have been just aroused from a refreshing sleep from the air of tranquil repose which hung about her person.

Her foot rested on an ottoman, and was half concealed by the vestments of the same fair girl that Mary had seen talking with her at the window.

She occupied a portion of the luxurious ottoman, and her round arm rested in the queen's lap so heavily that a rich purple tinge crept up from the velvet of her robe, and gave a soft and mellow tone to its exquisite whiteness.

Catherine put her daughter's arm gently away as she saw the young Queen of Scots, and smilingly extended her hand.

"We were about to send a messenger to learn what kept the fair lady of Scotland at her toilet so long," she said; "but a birth-day fête requires some extra adornment."

Mary blushed and lifted a hand to her head, conscious that it betrayed evidence of anything but a fastidious taste.

"I was not aware how rapidly the time passed," she faltered, blushing still more deeply as the dark eyes of Margaret de Valois were lifted to her face.

"Very probable—"

Perhaps Margaret would have added something more, but for the quiet, yet stern, glance which Catherine bent upon her.

"I have always told you, Margaret," said the queen, "that simplicity of attire, such as our cousin Mary has chosen for her birth-night, requires both time and study."

Margaret de Valois smiled; but beneath the arch dimples that played round her voluptuous mouth might have been detected something of inquietude and scorn, which amounted almost to a sneer. It was not exactly that, but an expression singularly unpleasant was woven with that careless and smiling look which brought the blood more warmly to Queen Mary's face.

"Our cousin—or fair sister it should be—was always remarkable for her simplicity. Francis persists in it that there is not a shepherdess on her native hills so guileless and frank-hearted as his fair betrothed."

"The Dauphin speaks like a lover, but not the less truly," said Catherine, rising. "It would be well if the same could be said of Margaret de Valois."

"She must have made trifling use of her mother's lessons and example, then," muttered the princess, as Catherine moved towards the door.

Margaret did not arise from the ottoman till her mother and Queen Mary had passed out. She then started to her feet, clutched her small hands together, and began to walk to and fro in the room.

Her face was lowering and threatening in its expression, and she stamped her foot vehemently on the carpet once or twice, as if there had been a serpent coiled amid the woven flowers, which she was eager to crush out of existence.

She was standing with her back to the door, when a hand was laid softly on her shoulder.

It was Catherine de Medicis, who had returned to caution and reprove.

"Foolish girl!" said the subtle woman, without allowing her usually sweet voice to vary in the slightest intonation; "go smooth that ruffled brow, and follow us to the reception chamber."

"I cannot act a part to-night," said the princess, flinging away the passionate tears that sprang to her eyes.

Catherine took her daughter's arm and led her to the mirror, which stood on a toilet close by.

"Look there," she said, "is that face one to lure back a laggard gallant?"

Margaret cast an angry glance at the mirror. Never had its delicate frame-work of flagrant gold, encompassed the reflection of a face so stormy with passion, and yet so beautiful. The effect which Catherine desired was instantly produced.

The princess exerted herself to subdue the tremulous motion of her lips, and suddenly closed her eyelids, till the heavy black lashes lay knitted and working on her flushed cheeks, in a strong effort to force back the tears that still gushed through them, one by one, like diamond drops in a fringe of jet. Catherine looked on and smiled blandly. She took a flask from her dressing-case, and pouring its contents into a tiny crystal cup that stood by, handed it to her daughter.

"Bathe your eyes with this," she said, "it will take the flush away directly."

Margaret took the cup, and as she poured the sparkling fluid into her palm, turned her large black eyes, with a cold and half-mocking look, on her mother.

"Is it your highness's favourite perfume?" she said, "that which took such an effect on my uncle, the late Dauphin?"

An angry and crimson streak shot across the queen's forehead and instantly disappeared. The next moment she became palid beneath the scornful glance of her child—but it was not the eye of a girl like Margaret that could long disturb the composure of so smooth and practiced a being as Catherine de Medicis.

Without appearing to observe the triumphant smile that curled her daughter's lip on noticing the effect of her taunt, she answered the question quietly, as if the words that had a power to move her for a moment, contained no hidden meaning.

"It was a favourite cosmetic with your lamented uncle, as it is now with the king," she said. "See if it has not given new brilliancy to the eyes of his daughter already."

Margaret glanced at the mirror and smiled, for the essence had indeed kindled her eyes with a brilliancy such as had never sparkled there before.

"If it could but light up the heart so!" murmured the strange girl, for with all the evil of her nature, there was mingled something impulsive and generous.

"There is no stimulus for the heart like a strong will," replied the queen, impressively.

"Mother!" exclaimed the princess, abruptly, "is it still your belief that he whom I saw in the garden an hour since was not the Scottish ambassador?"

Before Catherine could answer, the door was flung open, and a page announced the king.

It was well known in the court of Henry II. that the festival given in honour of Mary Stuart's sixteenth birthday, was but the prelude to many others, still more sumptuous, which were to celebrate her union with the Dauphin, and heir of France. Queen Catherine, who combined in her character the two opposite qualities of womanly cruelty and exquisite taste, had superintended the arrangements for this important festival in person.

"The sweet flower of Scotland shall be fitly represented," she said. "Hers shall be a festival of roses!"

And so it was. Garlands of fresh flowers, with the dew scarcely dry upon their petals, fell like a thick and fragrant drapery over the heavy window-frames. The exquisite stucco-work overhead gleamed like the ice tracery over a fountain through the massive festoons coiled around the carved beams which traversed the low ceilings.

A thousand silver lamps twinkled, like stars, amid the drapery of blossoms, and their perfumed smoke wreathed itself lazily among the leaves, shedding a rich and voluptuous atmosphere through the apartment.

It was a warm night, and the casements were all flung open, but each was embowered with roses, and looked forth on an artificial labyrinth of rare plants, which perfumed the air as it swept to the apartments, where it softly waved the sweet flowers, the burning lamps, and the smoke that curled from them, with a sleepy and pleasant motion.

Their majesties had not yet appeared, but the apartments were already crowded with a throng of nobles and ladies—a mass of smiling, glittering, gorgeous life.

The hum of soft, youthful voices filled the room. Bright diamonds, and brighter eyes, flashed in the brilliant lamplight.

All was excitement and pleasant expectation, for Queen Catherine never gave an entertainment to her court without inventing some novelties for their amusement, some new and exquisite device, the emanation of her own perfect taste, which was certain to surprise and delight her guests.

That night it was rumoured that a band of most skillful musicians had just arrived from Italy, and were, for the first time, to delight the court with their performance, and that statues of rare sculpture, never exhibited before, were to decorate the orchestra.

Many a bright eye and anxious look was lifted to the curtain of heavy silk, which fell over the orchestra, long before a single fold was lifted; and when it was at length drawn up, in a gorgeous mass of silver and gold, the vast rooms were filled with exclamations of delight. The little gallery of stone work, which had always accommodated the court musicians, was now a perfect jungle of flowers. A profusion of such blossoms as take their birth in foreign lands were entangled with sweet predigality around the stone railings, the pillars, and the fretted canopy over-head; the very cord of gold which looped up the curtain, was woven and twisted with Provence roses. A Cupid, sculpture-like from its symmetry, but with a flush of warm life breaking over it, stood poised on an angle of the railing, a scarf of silvery white floated around him, and with one exquisite foot crushing down the flowers, he poised over the glittering throng with bent bow and a golden arrow just flashing from his fingers. Another, beautiful and life-like as the one just described, stood on an opposite angle. His bow was relaxed, the arrows lay tangled amid the garlands at his feet, and his rounded limbs crouched dejectedly beneath the masses of rich flowers that half-concealed them. On the centre railing, where the stone work was broad and massive, the image of a young girl appeared, in a half recumbent position, with closed eyes, and one arm resting languidly among the flowers that pillowed her head.

Were these the specimens of Italian art—the statues so new and rare, that Catherine had received from her native land? The lights in that portion of the room were small and dim, the statues might be marble, but, if so, art had given a warm and life-like tinge to the cold stone.

While the courtiers were full of wonder and delight, a sliding door beneath the orchestra shot behind its pillows, and Henry II. appeared leading Catherine de Medicis, and directly behind came the Dauphin Francis and Mary of Scotland.

As the royal party passed beneath the railing, a garland of tiny flowers dropped from the crouching Cupid, and rested on Mary's head. All looked up. It must have been accident, for the little god remained perfectly motionless beneath his burden of blossoms. Mary turned her soft eyes upward; and smiled at the pleasant omen; but she felt the hand which lay upon Francis' arm lightly pressed, and a look of sadness followed the smile.

The royal party were advancing up the room, and a shadow still lay on Mary's face, when a golden arrow came flashing from the orchestra and dislodged the garland from her head. It was cut in twain and fell, arrow and all, at the Dauphin's feet. While every one was looking at the poised Cupid, who stood motionless and as before, save that the arrow had left his bow, the Dauphin took the azure ribbon, which suspended the insignia of some noble order, from his neck, and, knotting the garland together, laid it with graceful gallantry on Mary's brow again.

The arrow was a beautiful toy, burnished at the point and feathered with tiny gems, and when the courtiers looked toward the young couple again, Francis held it in his hand, and was about to secure the pretty crown in its place, by thrusting the arrow through the azure knot and the bright ringlets in which it was embedded.

That instant Mary looked up. The courtiers had drawn back in a circle, leaving the foreign ambassadors standing in front, and a little in advance of the rest stood the youthful representative of her own kingdom. His dark eyes were bent earnestly on her face, and there was something in their expression which deluged her face with crimson. He hastily lifted her hand and put the arrow back.

"Nay, it is too sharp and heavy," she said, in a low voice, striving to smile.

"And therefore you leave it with me," replied the Dauphin, in a voice as low as her own, but tender and almost reproachful in its tones, for with the quick perception of true love he had detected the cause of her confusion.

Mary did not reply, for her heart swelled at the thought of giving pain, and she could not trust her voice.

Francis stood with his eyes rivetted on her. How eloquently those sweet features told what was passing in her mind. His naturally pale face grew a shadow whiter as he gazed, and a look of keen anguish came to his eyes.

"I will keep it," he said. "It will be a fit remembrance of the hour, cold and glittering as my fate!"

He bent his head and seemed occupied in fastening the arrow to the diamond star which shone on his breast, but in reality he was striving to conceal his

emotion from the vigilant scrutiny of his royal mother, and the Scottish ambassador.

This brief interruption of their progress had caused Mary to remove her hand from the Dauphin's arm. When she placed it there again, after the arrow was disposed of, it was with a pleading humble motion that touched his heart.

He was grateful, and tried to smile cheerfully again; but those few moments were such as turn the fate of a lifetime.

Francis knew that he was unloved where every hope of his being was garnered up, and his smile was a painful one to look upon.

He moved forward with that fair creature leaning on his arm, all unconscious of the surprised and brilliant faces that everywhere turned towards the orchestra, and without feeling the burst of glorious music that swelled through the wilderness of flowers, and rang through the apartments like a jubilee.

While he had been occupied by his own painful thoughts, and moving forward mechanically, a galaxy of lights had started up amid the flowery gloom which hung about the orchestra.

The sleeping statue half-rose and bent over a lute, the Cupids fell gracefully back, and each dropped to his knee amid the flowers, with a musical instrument; the statues were turned, as if by magic, into a group of musicians, glittering with silver and gossamer raiment.

Amid the swell of music, the perfume of flowers, and acclamations of pleasant surprise, Margaret de Valois was revealed, surrounded by all the younger members of the royal family. She was the sleeping statue so promptly kindled into life, the smiling Cupids were her brothers, and from that blooming group came the music, which rose and swelled, or subsided into soft sighs upon the perfumed atmosphere.

If Margaret de Valois sometimes made a false note in her music, it was unnoticed in the hum and stir of the throng that moved a gorgeous mass beneath her seat: and if her dark eyes were constantly bent on one person alone of that moving crowd, there was no being, except her mother, sufficiently interested to observe it.

Still her fingers wandered over the lute, and her rich voice was poured upon the air—but she never once turned her glance from the Scottish ambassador. As the night waned, her eyes took a more brilliant fire, and the blood grew feverish in her cheeks. He had not turned his attention to her during the whole evening, but stood leaning against a pillar, regarding every look and motion of the young Queen of Scots, as if his very existence hung on her movements—and this it was that gave fire to her glance and fever to her cheek.

Long after the young musicians were supposed to have left the orchestra, Margaret crouched behind her flowery screen, jealously regarding him. If he moved, she forced back the garlands with her trembling hands to command a better view. If he remained still, she would kneel motionless, with her forehead pressed upon the stone railing, unmindful of the fragrance which she was crushing from the flowers that concealed her.

At last she saw the king and queen withdraw from the glittering throng, and she knew, from the ambassador's anxious look, that Mary and the Dauphin were about to follow. She reached forth her hand and drew the golden cord that lay at her feet. The curtain swept down, and but for the light that flowed through its crimson folds she would have been in darkness as she was alone. Stealing through a small door into an adjoining corridor, she took up a mantle, which had been flung from her person when she assumed the attitude of a statue, and enveloping herself in its folds, stole cautiously into the garden.

How quiet and holy was the stillness reigning through that garden. It fell subduingly even on the aroused feelings of Margaret de Valois, wicker as her errand was in that beautiful spot. The moon was in her zenith, a cool, balmy air swept over the thickets, and a shower of dew drops rained from their branches as her mantle swept them in her hurried progress toward the tulip tree.

"I will know all," murmured the passionate girl, casting a hurried look around before she concealed herself behind the huge trunk. "Once certain that it is himself—that love of another is the cause of his cold and scornful bearing—let me attain incontestable knowledge of this, and he shall feel that neither the love nor revenge of Margaret de Valois is easily shaken off."

Margaret drew in her breath suddenly, and shrank her limbs close together on the shadowy side of the huge trunk that formed her concealment, for at the moment the tall form of a cavalier came hurriedly from the palace, and she could see the jewels of his ambassador's dress glitter in the moonlight. He paused beneath the thick branches which flung their shadow on the spot where she was crouching, and

taking off his cap, allowed the cool air to blow over his forehead.

She had time to observe that he breathed quick and heavily, and that he stamped his foot once or twice on the green sward, as if prompted to the action by some inward excitement. But she had scarcely noticed these things, or obtained a clear view of his face, when a female, muffled like herself, came from a private door of the palace, looking nervously around, as if afraid that the broad moonlight would expose her movements to observation. On seeing the cavalier she sprang eagerly to his side, and leaning against the tree panted for breath, as if overcome with terror and fatigue. It was a moment before the nobleman addressed her, and when he did speak it was coldly, and in a constrained voice. But its first tones made the blood thrill in the veins of Margaret de Valois with a quick, painful rush, as it had never thrilled before.

"If the Queen of Scotland had decided to become Dauphiness of France, as her actions indicated, it would have surely been more kind had she admitted it a few hours since, and this painful interview might have been avoided."

Mary allowed the mantle to drop from her person, and even in that imperfect light the soft beauty of her face was visible as she lifted it, with an expression of affectionate surprise, to that of her companion. There was something in that graceful attitude and subdued look which caused Margaret to turn away her head. She felt that such beauty could not be hers, perfect as she was in form and features, and her heart grew faint with envy of attractions which knew their birth in deep feelings alone.

"Nay, what change is this? What has so altered thy tone and manner since we parted at nightfall," she said, half-anxiously; and yet she added, with a mischievous smile:

"Has the warm love you were so eager to pour upon my ear scarce an hour ago been drowned by the soft lute-tones of our cousin Margaret, or smothered in the wilderness of dying roses, which the proud queen has left perishing in the festal chamber there?"

"A fit association," said the noble, "a pleasant emblem of woman's love. Music that finds life beneath the fingers of a royal coquette—blossoms that drink a healthy bloom from the pure sunshine that is natural to them, but lavish their breath, and droop and wither when they are touched by artificial lamp-light, or the poisonous breath of a profligate court. The love that exists in Catherine de Medici's household, the voluptuous music of her unprincipled daughter, may as well be coupled with yon broken garlands, that have exhausted their pure breath in a false atmosphere, and hang scentless and drooping in the deserted festal hall, to be swept away by the first troop of menials that happen to remember that they cumber the walls. Those withered roses convey a lesson, fair queen. When first broken from their dewy stems in the garden here, and woven in masses on the walls of Catherine's palace, they did not seem more changed than the fair being who had left me but an hour before, with eyelids drooping to conceal the love-light that slept beneath them, and words trembling on her lips, which should only know birth in a true heart—not more changed than that same young creature, leaning on the arm of Catherine de Medici's son, blushing beneath his gaze, and receiving from his hand a type of the crown which must be taken in exchange for a heart true and devoted as mine has been."

Mary Stuart looked in the proud, and yet half-sorrowful face of her lover bewildered, but with a smile breaking through the red lips that were slightly unclosed in the surprise created by his words.

"Nay, this is affection, or rank injustice," she said, and he felt the clasp of her small hand on his arm. "How could I refuse the escort of France, or thwart the arrangements made by the queen? How could the blood be forced from my cheek when I felt the earnest gaze fixed upon me by the only eyes that ever had the power to bring blushes there?"

"Did not Francis bear away upon his bosom the golden arrow placed there by the hands of Mary Stuart before the whole court of France?" said the ambassador, in a softened voice.

Mary dropped her hands, and clasping them looked sadly on the ground.

"Would to heaven no more painful arrow had been left in that kind heart!" she said. "Mine will never know a deeper pang than it felt when Francis read its secret in the blushes which you complain of. He has learned for the first time, that the affections of his betrothed wife can never be his. That love which blinded them made him clear-sighted—but he, who had just cause, did not reproach me!"

The ambassador unfolded his arms which had been haughtily reposing on his bosom, and drawing closer to the young queen, held forth his hand; but she drew a step back, and continued, speaking earnestly, and with some displeasure in her tone:

"You call me half French," she continued, "and my subjects will have it forthwith, that gentle breeding and soft words cannot be joined with pure principles and strong purpose. And you, the ambassador of my people, think it a light matter to charge a queen, your own sovereign, with perfidy and feble resolve. Believe me, fair sir, although the royal blood of Scotland centres in the heart of a weak girl, it has learned to respect itself even in the court of Catherine de Medici. If my cheek crimsoned or turned pale to-night—and I felt that it did both—it was from no feeling unfaithful to the love which I have perhaps too fondly expressed in this very place. When the Dauphin clasped my hand at parting, a few moments since, it trembled to his touch, agitated by the heart tremor that shook my whole frame. As a brother—a dear, kind brother—I love the prince; and when I asked permission to see him in the morning and alone, it was scarcely above a whisper, for it seemed like treachery to leave him pale and wretched to meet his rival here."

"And yet you come with his garland on your forehead, publicly given, as the French crown may be at some future day," replied the young noble, half rebuked of the jealous spirit with which he had greeted a being so proud and lovely.

Mary shook her head with a slight gesture of impatience, and the garland fell to the ground, as also said:

"Were it, indeed, the crown of France, it were as readily shaken off as that little coronal of flowers, perishing as they now are, and typical of woman's lot, as fading and worthless things are said to be."

"Nay, forgive me the heresy," exclaimed the ambassador, bending his knee and imprisoning her hand in his, for her words had humbled his proud nature. "Thy lover's words did treason to his heart—look on him, he is indeed penitent."

Mary bent her bright, earnest face towards that of her lover, and, spite of herself, a smile just parted those red and restless lips.

"Nay, the comparison was not so very unjust, after all, sir ambassador," she said, with a touch of that sweet coquetry which was so graceful in her, and pressing her small hand to his shoulder, she seemed roughly inclined to keep him on his knees in the thick grass. "Promise me never to be jealous again, never to doubt, or put on that lordly air till those slandered roses are no more, and you have permission to arise."

"Not until the sweet contract which was planned here at nightfall is confirmed," said the noble; "not till I am made certain that no machinations of Catherine can influence you again in favour of this French alliance."

Mary instantly became grave and earnest. "Go back to my people," she said; "prepare them for our union—gain over the English queen—and when this is done we will be wedded in our own kingdom."

"The queen of England is already secured to our interests," replied the ambassador, eagerly, "and the Scottish nation requires no incentive to reconcile them to a union which places their queen once more in the bosom of her people. Inquire of the English ambassador, or any true Scot in Paris, and they will convince you that no measure can be unpopular with either country that rescues the sovereign of a nation from the influence, moral and political, of a woman like Catherine de Medici. Be firm and resolute, sweet lady," he pleaded, still more earnestly; "keep every thing secret from the court of France. Depart under my own escort and that of the English embassy to a people who are clamorous for a sight of their sovereign. In three weeks all can be arranged, the thralldom of Catherine broken, and Mary Stuart an independent queen, wielding the sceptre of her ancestors."

"And with the crown matrimonial placed on this haughty forehead," murmured the royal listener, passing her hand playfully across the lofty brow uplifted to her in the moonlight.

Even in the moonlight Mary saw the blood run over that forehead while her hand was yet lingering amid the raven curls that shadowed it; her remark had sprung from the generous affection of a young heart, and she could scarcely comprehend that it was calculated to arouse the sensitive pride of her lover. She was therefore surprised when he arose from his knees in spite of her restraining hand, and led her forth into the broad moonlight.

"Mary," he said, in a voice low and earnest, but the more impressive because it was quiet, "I do not deny that ambition which would lead me to seek advancement by all honourable means; it is a part of every energetic character, and exists strongly within me. But heaven is my witness, these feelings have no portion in the deep, deep love which made itself master of my whole being long before it was wrestled even to my own heart. I struggled against it, wrestled with it, but all in vain. I love you, not that you are a queen, but in spite of your being such."

you believe this with your whole heart, lady, when I say this."

"I have never for a moment thought otherwise," was the sweet and trustful reply.

"Will you then consent that I quietly prepare for my withdrawal to your kingdom? Now, without a week's delay?" pleaded the young man, clasping both her hands in his.

"You shall decide for me in all things," was the affectionate reply, and Mary Stuart timidly kissed the hands that closed her own, as if she had been a peasant girl, and that proud, noble monarch pleading for her love.

He drew her to his bosom and held her there, looking down into that beautiful face which dimpled with happy smiles as the moonlight gleamed over it, and murmuring words of grateful tenderness—gentle words—but eloquent with the manly spirit which held her sister nature in thrall.

"And have you indeed loved me so long and well?" she said, disengaging her form gently from his arms.

All at once her mouth dimpled with an arch smile—and her face took that playful, mischievous expression which was one of its brightest charms—"so very long," she added, "even while you were fascinated by the dark eyes of Margaret de Valois?"

"The eyes of Margaret never had charms for me," replied the lover a little impatiently, half-veiled by her arch badinage.

"Nay, you are drawn fairly to confession," continued the queen, playfully pursuing the subject.

"Think you I was blind to the soft glances cast from the orchestra this evening, as she played the lute to a proud cavalier who stood all the time leaning against a pillar close by, gazing—"

"Not on the bold eyes of Margaret de Valois," interrupted the lover, still more annoyed; "let me tell you, lady, take not between those pure lips a name which is mingled with the jest and revelry of every gallant in Europe, a name which alike disgraces her sex and the blood royal of France, a—"

The young noble started, and the half uttered sentence died on his lips, for the word "dastard" was uttered close by him in a female voice, that of a person half suffocated with intense passion. He looked round; every thing was hushed as death, and for a moment he almost believed the harsh word had been uttered by Mary Stuart; but she, too, had heard the voice, and the sweet, timid whisper with which she drew close to his side, was utterly unlike that in which the single word was uttered.

"What was that—sure I heard a strange sound!" she said.

"I heard it also," said the noble; "remain here a moment while I go and search yonder thicket."

He went toward the thicket and peered anxiously through the dewy branches which hung motionless in the moonlight, while Mary drew back and leaned her head against the tulip tree, so near to the concealed figure of Margaret de Valois which crouched so close to the earth on the other side, that her garments brushed the muffled head which lay pressed against the rough bark.

"I can find nothing," said the noble, returning to the terrified queen; "everything is still within the grove, not even the wing of a sleeping bird stirs; and yet the voice seemed close by." He looked upward into the great branches woven overhead as he spoke, but the moonbeams were shimmering among the thick leaves, and nothing so large as a human being could have been concealed among them.

"We must have been mistaken," said Mary, drawing a deep breath; "yet it is strange that some unaccountable sound should have startled us twice the same night, and on this spot."

The lovers moved towards the palace while Mary was speaking.

Margaret de Valois rose slowly to her feet, and looked after them, her hand clenched beneath the mantle that concealed her, and her black eyes glittering in the moonlight.

When they had disappeared, she crept stealthily toward the palace, through the private door to her mother's chamber.

But twice during her progress she was so near to the Queen of Scots that she could distinguish the quick and panting breath with which she hurried toward her apartments.

CHAPTER II.

CATHERINE DE MEDICIS was still awake, but lying on the couch, with a dim light flickering through the crimson curtains upon a face betraying more anxiety than she usually allowed it to wear. She rose upon her pillow when Margaret entered, and looked earnestly at the passionate and wayward girl. She had long her mantle aside at the door, and the dress of silvery gauze which she had worn to represent the statue hung about her person soiled and

damp from the greensward where she had crouched to conceal herself.

Her tresses fell in a tangled and wavy mass over her neck, and, as she sat down upon the bed, and flung them, with a passionate gesture, back from her brow and shoulders, the crushed and drooping rosebuds there fell upon Catherine's pillow.

The queen brushed them quietly away, and, burying her elbow in the rich down, remained in a position of luxurious ease, waiting for the strange girl to speak.

But, for the rosy light which streamed through the curtains, she might have been startled by the unnatural pallor which lay upon the full and voluptuous features of her child, for never until that night had the strong and bad passions of Margaret been fully aroused.

"Well," said the queen, at length, becoming impatient with the long silence and singular appearance of her daughter, "well?—but remember my women rest in the ante-room; speak low."

Margaret bent her head till its disordered ringlets fell over the night *coif* of delicate lace shading the beautiful features of her mother.

She breathed heavily as she spoke, but related word for word the conversation which she had just heard in the garden, not withholding even the scornful words coupled with her own name; but these words came in broken syllables through her clenched teeth, and Catherine de Medicis, with all her self-control, started to a sitting posture in the bed as they fell on her ear; but she sunk gently to the pillow again, and when Margaret ceased speaking, lay with one delicate hand pressed listlessly over her eyes, as if they were oppressed by the dim light.

"Go to your chamber now," she said, still shading her eyes, "nothing could have been better managed than all you have done. Rise early, and be the first to visit Mary Stuart in her own apartments; put rouge on your cheeks if they remain pallid as now, and, if the fire of those eyes cannot be subdued, at least allow the lashes to drop more gently over them—"

"But, mother," interrupted the princess, starting up, "am I to endure this?"

"With regard to the Scottish ambassador," continued Catherine, without in the least noticing the interruption, "let your conduct in his presence be unaltered; guard every tone and feature."

"And is this all? Am I to be neglected, marked and reviled in my father's palace, and yet have no redress, no revenge on the artful creature who thwarts me at every turn. I thought that you would counsel revenge not caution, mother."

"I would caution only that revenge may be more certain," replied the queen. "Go to your pillow, girl, and leave the rest to one who has a better control of her passions."

"Mother," said Margaret, returning to the bed and stooping over the queen, "will you separate these two persons?"

"Certainly," was the calm reply.

"But how? Not by— How will it be brought about, mother? I love this man devotedly, wildly, notwithstanding his scorn. How can you separate them without injury to him?"

A faint smile stealing over Catherine's face was all the reply she made. Even that was unseen by her daughter, for the subtle woman turned her head listlessly away, murmured that she was becoming drowsy and wished to be alone.

But the moment Margaret left the room, all appearance of languor vanished. Catherine started up, flung back the damask counterpane, and stepped to the floor. Regardless of the ornate slippers that rested on an embroidered stool close by, or the silken dressing-gown that fell from the bed as her movements agitated the drapery, she took up the lamp, and proceeded to unlock a little ebony cabinet which occupied a corner of the room. She touched the spring of a secret drawer, and her hand trembled very slightly as she drew forth some small object enfolded in silver and tissue paper.

She removed these glittering wrappers from a tiny crystal flask, which she held before the lamp and shook, with either hand, till the glittering beads flashed like diamond sparks against the flame.

"It is still powerful—more so than my own nerves!" she murmured, with a faint, self-mocking smile. "I thought this weakness had left me for ever. We shall learn."

As she uttered these words Catherine grasped the vial firmly between her fingers, her lips were pressed closely together, and the trembling of that outstretched hand gradually subsided till the clear and colourless fluid settled like water in the vial again.

"What a fool is that being who allows his physical nature to overcome the strong mental will!" she muttered in a tone of calm philosophy, replacing the vial in its private repository, and softly locking the cabinet.

"The body is but a weak instrument of the mind at best, and beauty a pleasant tool with man or woman."

As she uttered these words Catherine replaced her lamp in the golden bracket attached to her mirror, and glanced composedly at the beautiful face reflected there, while she fastened a key, just taken from the locked cabinet, to a chain of light Venetian workmanship concealed beneath the muslin of her night robe, and which, sleeping or waking, never left her neck. She then went back to her bed, drew the rich covering over her person, and slept luxuriously till late in the morning.

What woman is there, loving of heart, tasteful and accomplished, who has not learned how precious her feminine powers may become when devoted to the affections? How many pleasant sensations have been woven with the embroidery of a slipper, the name wrought on a handkerchief, the netted purse, the shadowing forth of a flower, or some one of those thousand pleasant devices by which a sensitive and tasteful nature loves to win upon the thoughts of its earthly idol.

Genius is comprehensive in its attributes, and genius in woman generally exhibits itself in all those minor accomplishments which distinguish the sex with quite as much originality and beauty as it may exercise in the highest walks of literature.

Mary of Scotland, even in her first girlhood, was distinguished for a degree of genius more comprehensive and strictly feminine than is awarded to any female of her age.

She awoke the morning after her birth-night festival with a smile on her lips. She had been dreaming of him, had seen him in deep slumber on a couch of withered garlands, torn from the festal rooms of the palace, and heaped beneath the tulip tree in the centre of the garden. The very flowers and leaves, which he had decided for their short-lived bloom, were pressed against his cheek, and lay broken amid the dark curls of his hair.

It was a pleasant dream, fantastically woven from her own thoughts as she sunk to sleep, but when she awoke it was still upon her mind, and she pondered upon it in that drowsy state which was even yet half a voluptuous dream.

"It shall be so," she murmured, drawing her hand across the soft eyes, half-closed beneath the shadow of her drooping lashes. "This very night he shall rest as I saw him in my sleep."

Mary started up as these words passed her lips, and rang the tiny bell that stood on a table close by her bed.

The waiting-woman entered to assist her in dressing; but, with that eager and girlish grace which arose from the poetical idea that had just entered her mind, she called for a dressing-gown of pure muslin that lay across a chair close by, girded it to her slender waist by a fragment of ribbon which had fallen to the carpet, and sat down to her embroidery-frame with her ringlets still confined beneath the lace of her night *coif*, and her small feet thrust hastily into slippers that she had worn the previous night.

"Go," she said, without lifting her eyes from the lily bud over which her hand was fluttering like a bird, "go to the reception rooms before the people have time to dismount them. All of you take baskets and set to work. Bring me enough of the roses you will find to fill this cushion when it is finished. Set my pages to work also, and lose no time."

As the attendants left the chamber to obey this fanciful command they were met by Margaret de Valois, who inquired the cause of their unusual haste.

A scornful flash came to her eyes as she received the answer, and, turning back from the door, which she had almost reached, she entered the sleeping-chamber of her mother. In about half-an-hour she came forth again and retraced her steps towards the apartment of Mary Stuart.

The Queen of Scots half-rose when she saw Margaret, and her face was suffused with a deep blush as the princess leaned over her chair and seemed entirely occupied in admiring the rich embroidery glowing beneath her fingers.

Mary drew the skeins of floss, which she had been using, hastily over the centre of her work, and, as she hoped, effectually concealed the initials and crest entwined there with her own.

But the jealous eye of Margaret de Valois had detected them, and, while Mary sat trembling and blushing like a culprit over her work, the unprincipled girl hastily withdrew from the room and sought that of Catherine de Medicis again.

Before Mary had quite recovered from the agitation which this visit occasioned, her women entered from the festal rooms, bearing the rose-leaves which she had desired them to gather. She bade them set down their fragrant burden and withdraw. Then she proceeded to cut the snowy satin from its frame, to shake

off the shreds of glittering silk that clung to the flowers which her genius had created, and to prepare it for receiving the mass of leaves that filled the whole chamber with their perfume.

This was a work of considerable time, and, just as she had crowded the last handful of leaves into the rich cushion, and was about to sew up the aperture which had been left for their reception, a page announced Catherine de Medicis.

Mary started to her feet, flung the cushion upon her bed, and breathlessly pulled down the heavy curtains.

As Catherine entered the chamber she detected the confusion which her visit had brought on the young queen. Casting a quick glance around, till her eyes settled on the bed, disordered and muffled in its drapery, she moved quietly forward, pressed her smiling lips to Mary's cheek, and inquired kindly after her health.

Mary had kept her attendants from the room all the morning, and, beside the disorder consequent on this, rose-leaves lay scattered over the carpet, and the chairs were encumbered with the garments she had worn the night before. It seemed but a natural act, therefore, when Catherine pushed back the volumes of heavy velvet with her hand, and sat down upon the bed with the purple folds falling all around her.

Mary blushed crimson, and started forward with an impulse to prevent the act, but when she saw that her royal visitor had only secured a seat without exposing the bed, or the cushion concealed on it, she became more composed, for, it was no uncommon thing for Catherine to visit the chamber of her ward, whom she ever treated with that familiarity and kindness due to a favourite child.

Catherine did not seem to observe the embarrassment or vague answers with which her gentle inquiries were received, but she still continued to converse with her gently, and with that easy flow of words which she could command at will, for the duration of half-an-hour. But occasionally one less embarrassed than the young queen might have observed that she moved her hands restlessly among the folds of velvet that almost enveloped her, till at last an opening was obtained which commanded a glimpse of the embroidered pillow lying behind them with the rose-leaves bursting through the aperture through which they had been pressed. The moment this was accomplished Catherine complained of a slight headache, and asked for a drop of the flower-water that stood on Mary's toilet.

Mary rose to obtain the vase of perfumed water pointed out. That instant Catherine's hand was thrust through the curtains and buried deep in the cushion. When she withdrew it a tiny flask of crystal was in its grasp, empty and with fragments of dead rose-leaves clinging to its damp mouth. An open caseament was close at hand, the empty phial flashed through it, and when Mary turned from her toilet, bearing the flower-water, she only observed that the face of Catherine de Medicis was paler than she had ever seen it before, and that her hand shook as she received the vase and dashed some of its contents over her forehead, hastily, and as one eager to be relieved from pain.

"It was a sudden spasm, and will soon go off," said the Queen of France, rising from the bed with a slight shudder, and replacing the vase of flower-water on the toilet. "Good morning, my fair Rose of Scotland. Adieu! but this soon seems close, let your women open another caseament, *ma belle*."

And with these lightsome words, she departed to her own chamber.

The moment she was alone Mary once more resumed the task so pleasant and so oft interrupted; but, as she united the cushion where it was left open, it seemed to her that a perfume stronger and more subtle than she had ever noticed before was emitted from the rose-leaves.

The labour which she had to perform occupied scarcely five minutes; but a sickly sensation crept over her even then, and she flung open the caseament for more air.

It was finished at last. For three entire weeks Mary had been occupied on that single pillow, thinking of her lover all the time, and yet half-persuading herself that it was not for him she worked, weaving a thought of him with every bud that glowed upon it, but never till that morning allowing herself to think that his crest could be embroidered there by her own willing fingers.

It was over now—the doubt and toil of mental conflict.

She had resolved at all risks and every hazard to follow the sweet impulses of her heart, to renounce the royal alliance proposed by France, and seek in her own kingdom, and with a subject, regal by nature, the happiness which can only be secured to woman through the affections.

Now that the task was done, those crests woven

together, and the tassels of threaded amethysts, emeralds and seed pearls fastened to each corner, she was almost sad—not that she hesitated to send it—no, no! but it was an "occupation gone," something that her new and sweet thoughts had brooded over till every leaf and bud seemed a kindred spirit whispering of him. She was almost sorrowful that her sweet task was finished.

Mary sat down with the cushion on her lap, and, placing her paper upon it, wrote a few melodious and touching lines of verse. She fastened her note amid the rich embroidery with a ruby pin, and carefully enveloping the whole, sent it by her page to the Scottish ambassador.

Catherine de Medicis saw the boy as he passed beneath her dressing-room window, carefully guarding his precious burden. She smiled, not as she did when surrounded by the courtiers of Henry II., but her face took one of those cold, sneering smiles that sometimes haunted it in solitude, but only in solitude.

"He will sleep on it to-night, or my Rose of Scotland has less influence than I suspect," she said. "Well, let us hope that his rest may be long and pleasant."

If Mary Stuart was rendered sad by the completion of her task, how much deeper was the gloom that fell on that young heart when she remembered the interview which she had promised to the Dauphin. The pain she would inflict, the ingratitude which he might suspect of her, all thronged upon her mind, and she allowed herself to be robbed for the interview, apprehensively and in tears.

Mary was in her dressing-room when the Dauphin came. He was very pale and walked unsteadily, as if a severe illness had just enfeebled his energies. When Mary arose and stepped forward to greet him he took her hand in both his, and gazed in her face till the eyes, which read her downcast look, grew more intensely mournful and filled with tears.

"I require no explanation," he said, gently, "nothing more than that sweet, troubled look to convince my heart of its entire desolation."

"Forgive me," said Mary Stuart, with touching humility, and the tears broke through those long, thick lashes as she bent and kissed the trembling hands that clasped hers, "oh, forgive me!"

"What have I to forgive?" replied Francis, in a tone which he vainly tried to render firm—kind and gentle it always was. "What should I forgive? That you love another devotedly, almost—no—no—that was impossible, no one ever did, ever can love as I have. Heaven grant that none may suffer as I have since last night! What shall I forgive? Nothing, nothing. If the human heart created its own impulses then would you be blameable. But is this so? Can I, with the utmost effort, wrest the deep feelings which are killing me from my soul? And if I, a man, cannot do this, how should it be expected of one so gentle and loving, so—alas! Mary, this is a severe blow. Bear with me, but remember I have nothing to forgive. Forgive me, rather, that I have so long tortured you with feelings that must disgust, pretensions for which you have hated me!"

"Oh, do not say that—torture, disgust with you—indeed, indeed, I have never felt either; never known a feeling that was not kind and affectionate as—as—"

"A sister, you would say," replied Francis, in a low, broken voice. "Alas! hatred were better than that."

"No, not as a sister, but better, better a thousand times," said Mary, carried away by the warmth of her feelings, and eager to prevent pain.

The Dauphin's eye kindled, and a slight colour broke into his cheek, but both indications of disturbed feeling vanished again almost as soon as they appeared.

"But not as you love him," he said, clasping her hand until it pained her, and speaking almost in a whisper. "Not as you love him."

Mary turned away her head and wept most bitterly.

"I will not deceive you," she murmured, in a voice low and broken as his own, "I dare not."

Mary could not go on, for she felt the hand which held hers begin to shiver, and saw, even through the tears that almost blinded her, how deadly pale he was.

The Dauphin was obliged to draw her toward a seat, for his limbs trembled, and he felt his strength giving way.

"Go on," he said, kindly, but still in a broken voice, "say that in words which I have hardly yet found courage to admit to my own heart; feeling in every nerve that you love another, I yet tremble to hear it said. Oh, Heaven! until this day I never guessed what poisoned arrows words and looks may become."

"Do not talk so wildly, so unkindly," pleaded the weeping girl.

"Unkindly! did I speak unkindly?" he said, in a voice that was almost reproachful.

"No, it was myself—the reproaches of my own heart, so wayward, so miserable."

"Tell me," said the Dauphin, making a strong effort to subdue the emotion that shook his whole frame, "what are your plans? How can I aid them? How prove the earnest and most powerful desire of my soul—that of promoting your happiness. Though it be to see you no more, to give away this hand myself, I will not flinch in the duty."

"It is our wish," said Mary, turning very pale and speaking with difficulty, "it is our wish to leave France."

"To leave France!" repeated the Dauphin, in a tone of utter dismay.

"We could not be happy here. Our people are clamorous for their queen. Every way it would be best."

Francis covered his face and remained silent, but evidently much agitated.

"We fear opposition from your mother, from the king, and would fain depart privately; but how to escape observation, how to elude the keen eye of Catherine de Medicis. We trouble to think of our position."

"Have no fear," said the Dauphin, in a firmer voice, and uncovering his pale face, "I will be your companion to the coast. They will never suspect that your betrothed husband, one who loved you as his own life, would aid you to remove from his presence for ever."

Mary looked in his face; then, covering her own, she wept passionately and in silence. His generous self-devotion seemed a reproach to the selfishness of her love for another.

The Dauphin arose and paced the floor firmly, and as one who had gained a command over some great weakness.

At length he approached the weeping queen, sat down, and, drawing her to his bosom, kissed her forehead. His lips were cold and quivering, notwithstanding the strong power of will that he had called forth.

She gave way to a burst of mingled affection, regret, and self-reproach, and, flinging her arms about his neck, wept bitterly.

"I could yet almost deceive myself into the belief that you love me!" said the prince, once more giving way to the emotions that threatened to overwhelm his frail strength—for he was in feeble health.

"Better than the whole world—next to him!" The last words were uttered almost in a whisper, but they fell distinctly on the heart that listened.

Once more these cold lips were pressed to her forehead, and Mary Stuart was alone—alone, and miserable; for what feeling heart ever gave pain to another without suffering the curse seven-fold in its own being.

A week went by, a week of sorrow and gloom to the royal family of France.

The Dauphin and heir was seriously ill, and of a disease which baffled the court physicians. He had no fever, no malady to which a name might be given, yet his usually infirm health seemed to have received a severe shock. He was feeble, and so spiritless that even his placid mother was alarmed.

During all this time Mary Stuart was wretched, nervous, and anxious. She had received a note of thanks for her beautiful gift, with the assurance that her lover's cheek should press no other pillow till they were both safe in Scotland.

After this it was rumoured that the Scottish ambassador was taken ill at his hotel, strangely, and at night; that every morning he awoke more languid and feverish, till at last he was confined entirely to his couch, raving and delirious.

When the intelligence was brought to the young Queen of Scots, she was sitting with Margaret de Valois and Catherine de Medicis. She remembered not, she cared not that they were gazing on her colourless face.

She did not observe that Margaret was weeping and wringing her hands in a fit of sudden grief, or that Catherine turned pale and sat motionless in her gorgeous chair.

Mary was, too full of sorrow for such observation. He was ill, dying, perhaps. The physicians had pronounced his case hopeless.

She cared not for concealment; she was no longer a queen, but the passionate, affectionate, troubled woman.

She did not for a moment think of asking sympathy from Catherine or her daughter; the depth of their iniquity could not be suspected by a heart warm and guileless as hers; but an intuitive feeling of distrust led her from them to the Dauphin.

It was nightfall, and Francis was sitting in his splendid chamber, solitary and heart-sick; the door

opened, and Mary Stuart, pale as marble, and with tearful eyes, stood before him. She came close to his side, and, kneeling down, pressed her lips upon his hand, humbly, and as a grieved child might sue for notice.

"Francis," she said, "I have wronged you and am punished. He is ill—dying!"

"Ill—dying!" exclaimed the prince.

"You promised once, I remember, to befriend us—to shield me, your betrothed wife, from the anger of Catherine, and, notwithstanding my treachery—my faithlessness, I come to throw myself upon your mercy."

"What can I do? The power of life and death is not mine," said the Dauphin, bewildered by her words.

"I only ask one thing—a trifle for you to grant, but life, everything to me—take me to his side; if you are with me no one will dare say it is wrong. I know you are suffering—that it is cruel to ask it, but this terrible anxiety must kill me."

"Be comforted, compose yourself," said the Dauphin, compassionately; "wait here a few moments and I will return."

Francis left the room as he spoke, and proceeded to the apartments occupied by his mother. He found Margaret de Valois wringing her hands, sobbing aloud and keeping reproaches on the queen—wild, incoherent words, which had no true knowledge to ground themselves on; for it was Catherine's policy to make no confidants, and Margaret could only guess that the Scottish ambassador was ill from any but the natural causes of disease. When the princess saw her brother she became mute, and drew back to a remote corner of the room while he approached the queen.

"Mother," he said, very gently, "the Scottish ambassador is taken ill, at his hotel, and his young sovereign is anxious to visit his sick bed. Will it please your majesty to accompany her?"

"What! me?" exclaimed Catherine, pale and agitated for the first time in her life.

The Dauphin turned his clear eyes searchingly upon her; he had no suspicion of the truth, but such unusual agitation in his polished and tranquil mother surprised him. She was warned by his look how near had been the betrayal of those anxieties that lay, gnawing like concealed vultures, at her heart.

"Surely it is natural that a lady so young as Queen Mary should desire the protection of your majesty's presence in the performance of so painful a duty," said the Dauphin, with quiet dignity; "but, if the request be displeasing, she may deem my escort sufficient."

"You did not give me time to reply," said Catherine, in her usual bland voice, though her face was turned away; "there can be nothing so displeasing in a request so natural; order chairs, and we will depart at once."

"I will go also, I who have—"

Margaret de Valois paused abruptly, for a quick glance from Catherine cut the imprudent sentence short on her lips.

"That would scarcely seem befitting an unmarried daughter of France," said the Dauphin, evidently to the great relief of his mother.

"And is not Queen Mary unmarried also?" said the princess, with a passionate gesture.

"She goes immediately under the protection of her betrothed husband to visit a subject," said Francis, firmly.

"To visit a lover!" was the angry rejoinder.

Francis turned a calm, reproving glance on the forward girl, and quietly asking his mother when it would please her to start, received the answer and left the room.

In a few minutes he returned with Mary Stuart, muffled in her cloak and leaning heavily on his arm. She was very pale and trembled violently, but scarcely more so than the agitated being that supported her.

The streets of Paris were dimly lighted in those days, and as Catherine was anxious to keep her visit to the ambassador's hotel a secret, the men who attended her chair carried no flambeaux. So the mournful caravans threaded the streets in darkness and silence till it paused in the court-yard of the ambassador's hotel. They passed forward—the Dauphin, his mother, and Mary of Scotland—up the stairs and through many a sumptuous and deserted apartment; still no attendant was there to receive them, and it was only by the faint murmur of voices from a distance that the party were guided towards the chamber where the suffering nobleman lay.

"Lean on me," whispered the Dauphin to the half-fainting young creature at his side; "try and control yourself; that must be his chamber door where the light streams through into the corridor."

They moved forward; the light gleaming steadily across the corridor was their only guide, for no sound,

not a murmur, now disturbed the gloomy silence of that vast building.

The door was gained at length. The light had gleamed from four tall wax lights that stood at the head and foot of a heavy bed occupying a corner of the room. Ostrich plumes hung motionless over the four huge posts, and masses of dark velvet swept gloomily downwards in the cold light.

Catherine de Medicis paused at the door, for even her proud soul was awed with the solemn hush of that spacious chamber. She leaned heavily against a pillar in the corridor, and motioned with her hand that the Dauphin and his companion should advance without her.

They did advance, awe-stricken by the gloom and silence that reigned around them. They approached the bed, and there, through an opening of the dark curtains, Mary saw the outline of a human form rising beneath a dark counterpane, it might be, or perhaps a pall, for it was a gloomy covering, and she shuddered to look upon it.

A figure was bending over the bed, and now the sobs of a human being broke through the room. The figure lifted its head, and a cry that seemed to rend her heart in twain, burst from the Queen of Scots.

It was the face of Margaret de Valois, ashy pale, and convulsed by grief. Her eyes were fixed wildly on the still form which lay beneath the mingled shadow and glare, contrasted by the wax lights and sombre hangings.

That face—Mary bent forward breathlessly, and while as marble, to attain a single glance at the face.

In the frenzy of her grief Margaret flung back the drapery with a wild sweep of her hand, and, with a single gasp, Mary Stuart sank to the floor.

She had seen the face of her lover, cold and rigid like marble, resting on her "pillow of roses." It passed before her eyes like a shadow, that cold, dead face—the black and glossy hair scattered over that snowy satin, the gemmed tassels that gleamed mockingly in the funeral light, and the black plumes nodding mournfully overhead, and then she became insensible.

Just then some friars entered, having been summoned from a neighbouring monastery to shrive the soul that had just gone into eternity. They passed by the shrouded figure of Catherine de Medicis, and, entering the chamber of death, where all spiritual aid was of no further avail, they assisted the Dauphin to lift the young Queen of Scots from the floor, where she lay supported by the arm of her scarcely less helpless companion.

There was no couch in the chamber save that funeral bed, already so mournfully occupied, but when one of the monks recognized the Dauphin and the rank of his suffering companion, he reverently lifted that marble head, and, removing the embroidered pillow, brought it forward and laid it beneath the pallid cheek of Queen Mary. That instant Catherine de Medicis uttered a stifled cry, and, coming hastily forward, snatched the pillow away, and sternly commanded the friar to take it hence and see that it was instantly burned.

The friars recognized their queen, and, bowing with abject humility, took the pillow, and were about to obey the command; but at that moment an old servant of the ambassador, who had entered with the religious men, stepped respectfully forward and pleaded for its return.

"His master had slept on that pillow ever since his illness," he said; "no one was suffered to take it from his sight an instant, but as he grew feeble and nearer death, his last wish had been that it might be placed beneath his head in the coffin, that even in the grave he might rest upon it."

Catherine felt the Dauphin's gaze fixed earnestly upon her; she looked toward Margaret de Valois, and knew by the flash of her dark eyes that another word might arouse suspicions never to be hushed again; so, with a power of self-control that never was equalled by woman, she quietly relinquished the pillow, and recommended that it should not again be removed from the dead, as a disease so sudden and fatal might be contagious.

Once more the glowing buds and flowers, which Mary had woven with so many happy thoughts, were kissed by the cold cheek of the dead; again the threaded pearls, and the glossy satin, and the buds that seemed bursting into flower all over it gleamed mournfully in the cold wax light, a painful contrast to the paraphernalia of death that enveloped and overhung it like a cloud.

Mary of Scotland was carried from the house insensible, followed by the awe-stricken but impatient Queen of France, and Margaret de Valois, who had left the palace on foot, and in the night, stubborn in her purpose to look once more on the only face that ever aroused a true or deep emotion in her passionate and fickle heart. Subdued and softened by the scene that had presented itself, she watched with something of true kindness over the Queen of Scots while she lay ill for many weeks after that melancholy night.

In less than two years from the date of this story Mary Stuart became the wife of Francis. The quarterings of England, France, and Scotland were her proud assumption.

She was beloved by the people of two great kingdoms, almost adored by the good prince whom she had learned to love with all the subdued affection of her nature; but even at this proud and happy period, a shadow would fall on her sweet face, and tears would start to her eyes, when she thought of "the pillow of roses," and that pale head which found rest upon it in the tomb.

S.

INSECTS THAT KEEP SLAVES.

ENTOMOLOGISTS have long been aware that two species of Ant will dwell in the same nest, and live upon friendly terms, although the association of the working part of the community is not voluntary, but compulsory.

The Ant which employs enforced labour is the Amazon Ant (*Polyergus rufescens*), and is tolerably common on the Continent. This insect is not furnished with jaws which are capable of performing the work that usually falls to the lot of the neuter; but the same length and sharpness of the mandibles which unfit the insect for work, render it eminently capable of warfare. When, therefore, a colony of Amazon Ants is about to establish itself, the insects form themselves into an army, and set off on a slave-hunting expedition.

There are at least two species of Ant which act as servants to the Amazon Ants, the one being named *Formica fusca*, and the other *Formica cunicularia*; and to the nests of one or other of these insects the Amazons direct their march.

As soon as they reach the nest, they penetrate into all its recesses, in spite of opposition, and search every corner for their spoil. This consists solely of the pupæ which will afterwards be developed into neuters; and vast numbers of the unconscious young are carried off in the jaws of the conquerors. The rightful owners and relatives of the captured young cannot resist the enemy, as their shorter though more generally useful jaws are unable to contend with the long and sharply-pointed weapons of their foes.

After the marauding army has returned, the living spoils are carefully deposited in the nest, where they are speedily hatched into perfect insects of the worker class, and immediately take on themselves the labours of the nest, just as they would have done in their own home.

The Amazon Ant seems to be utterly incapable of work; and in one notable instance, when a number of them were confined in a glass case, together with some pupæ, they were not only unable to rear the young, but could not even feed themselves, so that the greater number died from hunger.

By way of experiment, a single specimen of the slave Ant (*Formica fusca*) was introduced into the case, when the state of affairs was at once altered. The tiny creature undertook the whole care of the family, fed the still living Amazon Ants, and took charge of the pupæ until they were developed into perfect insects.

Some writers have enlarged upon the hard lot of the slave Ants, imagining their servitude to be as distasteful to them as it is sometimes made to human slaves.

Mr. Westwood, however, points out very clearly that any compassion bestowed upon them is wasted, and that the lot of the "helots"—if they may be so called—is precisely that for which they are made.

The labours which the little creatures undertake are not arbitrarily forced upon them by the dread of punishment, but are urged upon them by the instincts implanted within them. They would have worked in precisely the same manner, and with exactly the same assiduity, in their own nests as in that of their captors, and the labours are undertaken as willingly in the one case as in the other.

They find themselves perfectly at home, and are in every respect on a par with their so-called masters. In point of fact, however, the real masters in the nest are the slaves, for upon them the Amazons are dependent from their earliest days to the end of their life, and without them the entire community would perish.

The slaves have no other home but that to which they have been brought, and are no more to be pitted than are dogs, cattle, and other domestic animals that never have freedom. Indeed, none but solitary animals can be free even in the wild state, for they are held in absolute servitude by the leaders of the herds, and, if they dare to disobey, are summarily punished.

As the slaves are always neuters, it is necessary that fresh importations should be made as fast as the demand for workers exceeds the supply; and it is really a wonderful thing that the Amazon Ants should always select the pupæ which will afterwards be developed

into neuters, and never take those from which males or females will issue.

The Amazon of the Continent is not the only Ant which enslaves the neuters of another species, for, in different parts of the world, several species of Ants have been observed which seize upon workers belonging to other nests, and bring them to do the work of the home. A Brazilian species (*Myrmica palensis*) has been observed to act in this manner.—From "*Homes without Hands*," by the Rev. J. G. Wood.

BEAUTIES OF TRUE BENEVOLENCE.

We cannot feel the wild and sweet excess of joy within our spirits, but we yearn to make mankind partake our happiness.

SUCH is the state of human life: men's days are loaded with a variety of troubles and distresses; so precarious their enjoyments, so uncertain their hopes, that there is a constant demand for the exertion of the friendly and human affections. But while we view the circle of human woe, we may easily observe that the tear of compassion and friendship alleviates our grief, and softens our sorrow; we find some relief from the pity of surrounding friends, even when we are laid upon the bed of languishing and pain, and since this is the case—since we have it in our power to administer some comfort to our fellow-creatures, under the burthen of affliction, it then naturally becomes a duty; for, to him that is afflicted, pity should be shown from his friend. But, alas! there are many who wear little more than the semblance of grief, while pity is perhaps a stranger to their breasts.

If fortune smiles on us, if wealth and honour are the companions of our lives, we hail the prosperity of each other, we crowd to send forth our praises, and intrude our good offices where they are neither asked for nor required. Riches and power want not the assistance of understanding and virtue to command friends, or establish a character; the fawning community will overlook their folly, soften their vices, and give a reputation without any foundation in wisdom and truth. But if circumstances are changed, we change the whole scene also; and he who was the child of fortune, who lived in ease, affluence, and honour, is brought to the valley of affliction, surrounded with neglect and piteous insult.

This, then, is the season to exert our offices of friendship and benevolence, this is the time to show esteem, and prove useful; not by mere assurances of good will; not by uttering sentences of pity, which the head remembers more than the heart feels, and which serve more to point out happiness than to minister to it; but by an actual endeavour, a real exertion, however trifling, to do good, and improve our dispositions on principles just and benevolent. The offices of benevolence are evidently our duty. It is the voice of nature that "to him that is afflicted pity should be shown from his friend." Not the mere passion, but pity ripened to acts of beneficence and charity. We can never habituate ourselves too much to the cultivation of the beauties of true benevolence.

J. A.

RED HAIR.—It is the fashion in Paris to have hair the colour of the Empress's. How the brunettes accomplish this is thus explained. At the appointed hour the candidate for golden honours enters the dressing-room in a long white dressing-gown. Her hair floats loosely over her shoulders. The artist begins by separating every hair. Then he pours over the head a phial of "water" (probably a deadly poison). He saturates each hair. This occupies two hours. After fifteen minutes he soaks the whole hair in ice-water. He then kneads the hair with his hands. Again ice-water is applied. He moves the "gooses" within a few inches of the hair, and it turns red. The whole operation lasts five hours, and leaves the lady with red hair, an intolerable headache, mangled nerves, and two pounds less in pocket.

THE SANCY DIAMOND.—The celebrated Sancy diamond, which has been purchased for £20,000, by Messrs. R. and S. Garrard and Co., of the Haymarket, for Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, the great Parsee merchant, of Bombay. The historical interest of this gem is worthy of remark. It once belonged to Charles the Bold, last Sovereign Duke of Burgundy, who wore it in his cap at the Battle of Nancy, where his army was routed, and himself slain, in the year 1477. A Swiss mercenary soldier found the diamond among the spoils of the battle-field, and sold it to a French gentleman, M. de Sancy, whose family kept it nearly two centuries, though it was lost upon one occasion—having been intrusted to a servant, who was charged to carry it to Switzerland, to be deposited there as security for the payment of the Swiss troops hired by King Henry III. The servant was attacked by robbers and murdered; but when his corpse was opened—having been disinterred after his burial—the diamond

was found safe in his stomach. He had swallowed it to prevent the robbers from taking it away. At a later period this jewel passed from the Barons de Sancy to the Crown of France, and it was worn by Louis XIV. and Louis XV. at their coronations. It was stolen by the seneclottes at the sack of the Tuileries, in 1789. It then became the property of the Queen of Spain, who gave it to her paramour, Godoy, the Prince of Peace, and from him it passed to the family of Prince Demidoff, its last possessors. This diamond is of peculiar form, being neither of a brilliant nor a perfect rose cut. It is what is called a briolette—that is, a solid drop; but it differs from a briolette in having flattened tables back and front, a perfect briolette being cut to a point. The facets are very regular and well cut, which leads to the belief that, although the stone retains its original form, the work has been gone over and improved at no very distant date. We are the more inclined to this idea from the fact that the stone was said to weigh originally 55 carats, but its weight now is only 53½ carats.

ALL ALONE.

By E. D. E. N. SOUTHWORTH,
Author of "*The Hidden Hand*," "*Self-Made*," &c., &c.

CHAPTER CXX.

IN THE OLD FOREST LODGE.

Now see a large, old-fashioned room,
With panelled wainscot high;
Old portraits round in order set,
Carved, heavy tables, chairs, buffet
Of dark mahogany.
And there a high-backed, hard settee,
On six brown legs and paws,
Flowered o'er with silk embroidery;
And there, all round with flagstone,
Tall screens on gilded claws.

Mrs. Southey.

The last rays of the setting sun were piercing through the woods in long lines of golden light, gilding each dry twig and fallen leaf, as the waggon turned into the old disused avenue, now almost obliterated by withered grass and dead foliage.

The waggon drew up before an old gray stone mansion, of oblong form and many windows. There was a carved and pillared portal, and a heavy double oaken door in the centre of the front.

All the windows looked dark and glum, except the two on the left side of the front door. These two glowed with a genial light from the fire within.

Owen jumped from the waggon to assist his mother.

Nancy ran out from the house to welcome them.

"Almost frozen, ain't you? well, here's a fire inside such as you ain't seen since the brew-house was burnt down! There, give me the baby, Owen, and you take t'other one."

"Goo!" cried Lily Gay, in defiance of cold and everything else, as she was handed from Owen's arms into Nancy's.

Owen then took Lily May and held her carefully to his bosom with one arm, while he offered his hand to help his mother out.

Very lightly Amy touched that willing little hand as she alighted.

And while the driver was engaged in unloading the waggon, Nancy led the whole party into the house.

They entered first a spacious hall, on the left side of which Nancy opened a door admitting them into a vast apartment, that must have been the drawing-room of the family in ancient times.

It appeared to run the whole depth of the house from front to back. And at the back, in a broad fire-place, blazed a great fire.

It cheered the very soul and body of Amy, who approached it, rubbing her hands with satisfaction.

"It's jolly, isn't it, mother?" said Owen, rubbing his hands in sympathy, when he had set Lily May on the floor.

"It is very cheerful," said Amy.

"It throws out the heat in solid columns," said Nancy, as she brought Amy's own little chair and placed it for her beside the chimney corner.

All this time the driver was unloading the waggon, and bringing the things into the hall.

Amy, having well warmed herself and the children, looked around with satisfaction, and also with surprise and curiosity.

The room was unfamiliar not only in itself but in its furniture.

At the two lofty front windows, were rich and heavy, though old and faded, yellow damask curtains; on the walls hung many smoke dried portraits, in tarnished gilded frames; against the walls were ranged richly carved, though worm-eaten old oaken tables and chairs; and drawn up on one side of the fire-place was a large sofa, covered with rich but faded yellow damask like that which draped the window;

on each side of the chimney were antique oaken cupboards, with glass doors.

Amy's eyes ranged over all the unfamiliar objects, and then turned upon Nancy.

"Oh, yes," said the woman in answer to that look. "Just so. When me and Master Owen comed this morning, you may depend we didn't do nothing till we two roamed all over the house in search of the most comfortable room; and in doing it we comed across all this furnitur', layin' rottin' with mould and damp; some in one place and some in another, and all like as they was flung away to rot. And so me and Master Owen, we first went to work and we made a roarin' fire in this room, which was one of the best. And then we cleaned it up and put down your carpet which you see only kivers this square place in front of the fire and doesn't look bigger'n a rug compared to this room! And then we went and carried all the best of that thrown away furnitur' down into the hall—which the driver helped us with the heaviest things—and very kind it was of him. And we shook, and brushed, and dusted all on 'em, and we ranged them here just as you see. And only look how comfortable!"

"Yes," said Amy, with a pleased expression of face, "I somehow like the old-fashioned aspect of everything around me."

"And only look at them nice cupboards, with glass doors, each side of the fire-place!" said Nancy.

"Oh, yes, mother dear, look! When we unpack the boxes, we can put all our books in one cupboard as a book-case, and our best crockery were into the other as a sideboard; and how cozy that will be."

"Yes," said Amy, smiling in sympathy with their satisfaction.

"And this good old sofa, mother dear. This is the best of all. How comfortable it will be for you to lie down on when you are so tired every day," continued Owen.

At this moment the driver came in, touched his hat, and reported that he had brought in all the rest of the furniture.

Amy thanked him, and hospitably invited him to come in and warm himself and stop and get some supper.

But the man excused himself, saying that it was growing dark and he wanted to get home in good time. And with a second salute he left the house.

The tea-kettle was singing merrily on the hearth; and the table was set upon that square of carpet that had once quite covered Amy's little back parlour, but that looked like a mere rug in this large drawing-room.

Nancy began to slice some bread to make toast, and Owen went to examine the contents of the hamper sent by Mrs. Potts.

And with the united efforts of the woman and the boy a better table was spread than Amy had seen since her widowhood—fragrant tea and buttered toast, with cold sliced ham.

The long ride through the pine forest, with its stimulating terebinthine odours, combined with the exhilarating winter air, had renewed Amy's appetite, so that she keenly enjoyed her repast.

When it was over and the service was washed up and arranged in the right-hand glass cupboard, Amy arose to make an inspection of her new quarters.

"Where have you put up my bed, Nancy?" she inquired.

"Here," replied the woman, opening a door in the wall on the left side of the apartment, and leading her mistress into a bed-room about half the size of the drawing-room. Here Amy found all her plain chamber furniture neatly arranged, and in the open fire-place a fire burning.

"Oh, mother, dear, isn't it fine to be able to have a fire in every room we use?" said Owen.

"It is indeed, my dear!" replied his mother, spreading her hands before the genial blaze.

Amy was very tired, and the warm room, with its clean, soft bed, and bright, cheerful fire, was very inviting; so she said she thought she would go to rest for the night.

"But first I would like to see your room, Owen dear," she added.

Owen opened a communicating door that stood exactly opposite the chimney, and admitted his mother into another room nearly corresponding in size and shape with her own—the only difference was that hers was back and his was front—both were parallel, and communicating with each other and with the long drawing-room.

"I took the front one because it was more exposed, mother dear; and gave you the back one because it was more retired and warmer, and nearer to the kitchen."

"But why didn't you make a fire in your room, since there is such a plenty of fuel?"

"Oh, mother dear, because when I am covered up warm in bed, I love to breathe the cold air. It makes me feel warmer."

Amy inspected Owen's chamber, and seeing that all was right, she returned to the drawing-room and called her little family together to ask the Divine blessing before retiring.

"Where are you going to sleep, Nancy?" she inquired, as they were about to part for the night.

"I'm just going to have a shake down here, right before this fire, as it would be a sin and a shame to leave all alone by itself for to-night, and to-morrow I mean to fix up a room, which is the housekeeper's room, joining of the kitchen."

"I hope you will rest well, Nancy. Good night."

"Good night. Good night, Owen."

So they separated.

The weather had changed by the morning. The sky had clouded up. The snow was falling, and the north wind had arisen and frozen all the streams. It was intensely cold.

But that had not prevented Owen from turning out early.

With all a boy's interest in a new abode, he sprang out of bed and dressed himself in haste and went into the drawing-room, which was already cleared, and made a comfortable glowing fire and arranged a ready-spread breakfast-table.

Any came in, and breakfast was served.

This day being the Sabbath was spent very quietly by Amy and her little household. They had morning service at home. And then Owen unpacked a few books suitable for Sunday reading, which employed their time.

The snow-storm continued all day long.

On Monday the weather was still very cold, and it was snowing and blowing at a tremendous rate, and no one could venture out; therefore Amy settled herself to her sewing with the two little sisters playing on the carpet at her feet; and Owen and Nancy went to work to complete the arrangements of their new abode.

They brought in the cradle and Amy's work-stand, and placed them near her, to be at hand when wanted. Then they fitted up Nancy's bed-room next to the kitchen.

Owen unpacked the box of books, and arranged them in the left-hand glass cupboard. And then unpacked the best crockeryware, and set it in order in the right one.

Finally, he opened Mr. Spicer's box, which he found filled with bottled meats, preserves and pickles, tongues and hams, jellies and jams, and a bottle of fine old port.

"Oh, mother, look here! This box of things was the children's, was it? I wonder if Mr. Spicer thought the two little sisters were going to eat ham, and tongue, and cheese, and pickles? Oh!" exclaimed Owen, in admiration.

Any only smiled, and told him to put all the things, except the ham and tongue, in the cupboard with the crockeryware.

By evening all the arrangements were completed. And the family, being very weary, went early to bed.

The next day Owen had to walk to town, through all the snow, to carry home some needlework that his mother had finished for a customer, and to bring back more.

But the fourth day hung very heavy on his hands.

Ah! when would Mr. Lacy return? Owen did not exactly know. He thought the time very long, but he thought that if his mother could draw him some patterns he could carve butter prints that would please the housekeepers whom he hoped to make his customers.

Amy promised to draw the patterns. Owen shaped out the rude forms of a dozen prints. And upon the face of each, Amy drew in pencil a rose, a lily, an eagle, a ship, or some other simple device, which Owen carefully carved out with his penknife. This took all his leisure for another week. And at the end of it Mr. Lacy had not arrived. The third week was spent by Owen in shaping out wooden spoons, butter-paddles, potato-mashers, and other light utensils, until at length he had completed quite an assortment of wooden ware of his own manufacture.

Twice a week Owen went to town to carry home his mother's finished needle-work to her customers, and to bring her back more to do. And every time he went, he called at Lacy's shop to inquire of the young shopman who was in charge, whether the proprietor had been heard from, and when he was expected home. And he always received for an answer that Mr. Lacy had written that he was coming home; that he had not been heard from since; but that, doubtless, he would arrive soon.

And with these replies the boy was obliged to return to his home and his carving, and be satisfied.

When Owen could find nothing else to do for his mother, he went into the village to hunt up some of their bad-paying old customers.

They had more than thirty pounds of bad money on their books, counting in what was due the late doctor.

On the first day that Owen went collecting he took two pounds. Then he borrowed a small market basket from Mrs. Potts, and filled it with fresh meat and vegetables, and carried it home.

Amy, who for the week past had been living on her old diet of weak tea and dry bread, varied occasionally by a thin rasher from Mr. Spicer's cured ham, hailed these fresh provisions with as much surprise as satisfaction.

"And how on earth did you get them, Owen?" she inquired.

Her son explained that he had collected two pounds, and had spent one.

"Oh! Owen, this is a great treat—so early in the season, too; and I am very glad to have it; and I know it will do me real good; but I am afraid, love, you dun people," said Amy, gravely.

"Yes, mother dear, I do dun them—well, too," answered the boy, firmly.

"Oh! Owen, darling, you mustn't pester people for money."

"Won't I pester them neither, mother, dear, when you want it so much to buy food! I'll pester the lives and souls out of them, see if I don't."

"Owen, Owen, you must not be so sharp."

"Mother, mother, what will become of you and the two little sisters if I am not sharp? You may be sure I am going to be as sharp as a needle!"

"Oh! Owen, I am sorry to hear you say so, my son. I could not bear the idea of your growing up to love money so much as to become a hard and cruel man!" exclaimed Amy, with emotion.

Her little son suddenly knelt down by her side as she sat in her low sewing chair. And he put his arms around her and laid his head sideways on her lap, and looking up in her face, said:

"Mother, dear, I am not hard and cruel—not in the least. Listen, darling mother. There are some poor people who owed father for medicines. Now I never troubled them. But there are other people well-to-do and careless; and I dunned them. Now this two pounds I worried out of the brew-house clerk, Bowling, who has plenty of money, and nobody but himself to keep; and who owed us six pounds for Cologne Water and scented soap, and shaving cream and such. Mother dear, poor and honest people may be spared; as for the prosperous and dishonest—yes, indeed, will I hunt and worry them."

You see there was no maudlin sentimentality about this little fellow. He drew a clear and true line between justice and charity, and never by any chance got them confused.

Gradually his self-reliance was beginning to influence his mother. She was learning to trust in him.

She made no further objection to his method of collecting his debts.

And from this time, every day, Owen walked to the village to call on these bad-paying customers. Although he himself termed his perseverance "worrying," or "dunning," or "pestering" them, yet in fact his manner towards them was always respectful, as that of a boy who had so much self-respect was sure to be.

At the end of the fourth week of their stay at Forest Lodge, and the first week of Owen's calls upon his mother's customers, Owen had collected about twenty pounds of the money that was owing.

CHAPTER CXXI

OWEN BEGINS BUSINESS.

He will dare all and bear all,
And let no drop fall;
He will plot and contrive
A fortune to live.

From the German of Schiller.

THE March winds were whistling shrilly through the pine forest, and the snow was frozen on the ground, when one Monday morning Owen went to town as usual, to carry home his mother's work, to get more, and also to stir up the bad-paying old customers.

As he entered the village, he saw Mr. Spicer standing at his door, apparently waiting for him.

As Owen came up, the grocer beckoned to him, and inquired:

"How is it, my boy, that you never come for any more groceries? Don't you mean to deal with me any longer?"

"If you please, sir, your parting gift has lasted us all this month past, so that we had no need to come. When it is gone I will come again."

"All right, my boy; the sooner the better. And how are all at home?"

"Mother is a great deal better, thank you, sir. She—no, it is Nancy, I believe, that says so—Nancy says it is being free from great care, and living better, and also that it is the breath of the pine woods that is doing her so much good."

"Yes, the air of pine woods is a cure in itself for weak chests. Owen?"

"Yes, sir."

"I would like to walk out some Sunday after church, to see for myself how you are getting on. Do you think your mother would care to see me?"

"Oh, sir, to be sure she would! Mother would be glad. Why, you are the best friend mother has got in the whole world; and she would be just as glad to see you as if—as if—as if—"

"As if I was her grandfather, Owen?"

"Yes, indeed, sir; that she would."

"Umph, umph, umph, umph."

"Shall I tell mother you are coming, sir?"

"Yes, Owen; tell her that I shall come out next Sunday evening after church, to see my little tiny sweetheart, Gay. What a charming little creature she is! Like a buoyant bird with her springing and jumping."

"If you please, sir, don't you like Lily May too?"

"Lily May? who is she?"

"The other poor little sister, sir. She is not like a bird. She is like a little angel from heaven, sir. I want you to like her, sir!"

"Lily May?—oh, yes, of course! I like her very much, Owen! At least I am sure I shall be very fond of her when I see her."

"Thank you, sir."

"And, Owen?"

"Yes, sir?"

"I shall bring Bill out with me. I never leave Bill at home by himself."

"Oh, yes, sir, do please! It is so beautiful out home. And Bill will like it. There are so many squirrels and rabbits—and they are so tame they will hardly go away when I come near them. But now, if you please, sir, I must be off. I will give your message to mother, sir. And I am sure she will be glad to see you," said Owen, as he bowed, and bounded off on his way to Mr. Lacy's shop.

A great pile of boxes, of all shapes and sizes, nearly blocked up the side-walk before the door, and proved to Owen that the new goods had come.

Inside the shop, beneath the two counters, were more boxes in course of being opened and emptied by Mr. Lacy and his shopman.

"How do you do, sir? I am so glad to see you back again at last," said Owen, taking off his hat as he entered the shop.

Mr. Lacy lifted his head and shoulders from the bottom of a deep box, and shook hands with his little friend.

"I am glad to meet you, Owen, so soon after my arrival. You don't let the grass grow under your feet, my boy."

"You have the goods, I see, sir?"

"Oh, yes—and your portion also. But yours is all mixed up with mine in the various boxes, so that the whole of it cannot be got together at once. You must have patience, Owen."

"Yes, sir, I will. Please, when can I have the goods?"

"Late this evening or early to-morrow morning."

"Then I will come for them early to-morrow morning, sir. I am very glad you have got back safe, sir! Good day!" And with a bow the boy left the shop and went on his way.

He carried his mother's finished work to the lady who employed her, got another parcel of the same sort, and then went and called at the "Elm Tree," to see if he could engage the cart the landlord kept for hire, to take his goods home the next morning.

Mrs. Potts saw him from the window of her private parlour; and she rushed out through a side door into the bar, and caught him by the arm and pulled him into her own room. And then she let him go, while she stood and looked at him with her arms a-kimbo.

And all this happened before Owen had time to speak.

"What business has a boy like you going into a bar-room?" she severely demanded, as soon as she could get her breath.

"Why, ma'am, I went in there only to—"

"What took you there?"

"If you please ma'am, I went to—"

"Hold your tongue, I tell you, when I am speaking! You had no call to go there at all! Bars have been the ruin of many a man and many a boy! And it might be the ruin of you! And you a widow's son, too! I have asked you two or three times what took you there! And you haven't told me yet! Pray can't you answer me, sir?"

"Yes ma'am, indeed, if you will let me! I went in there to see Mr. Potts to hire a cart—or I mean—"

"You don't know what you mean! Boys is as prone to evil ways as cats is to mice! You keep away from bars! Bars have ruined more boys and men than pulpits ever saved. I say it and I stand to it, though I keep one myself. Why don't you tell me what took you there?"

"Ma'am I am trying to. I went to engage a cart to take some goods home to-morrow morning. I thought I would bespeak it to-day so as to be sure of it to-morrow."

"Oh! you did, did you! Well, take my advice, as has had a long experience of bars, and keep away from them. You're a widow's only son and only hope—"

"And two little sisters," said Owen.

"And so you ought to be very good. Go home to your mother, my lad, as fast as ever you can. And I will see that you have the cart as early as you want it to-morrow morning. And it shan't cost you anything either, because we are sending out to our farm for wood, and as it is in your neighbourhood, and the cart goes empty to return full, it may as well carry your things out."

Owen thanked the landlady, and bowed himself out.

Owen made three or four calls upon the "bad pays," and succeeded in collecting a few more shillings. He bought a breast of veal for his mother, and then started to walk home.

The supper had been kept back for him; and, as it consisted only of the regulation weak tea and dry bread, Owen displayed his marketing, and the veal cutlets were soon dressed and added to the repast.

At supper Owen told the events of his day in the village.

Amy rejoiced with him at the safe arrival of Mr. Lacy with the new goods; laughed with him at good Mrs. Potts' alarm; triumphed with him at the spoil recovered from the "bad pays," and finally agreed with him to give Mr. Spicer and his boy a warm welcome and a good supper when they should come on Sunday.

Then Owen launched into the subject of his hopes and plans for the future; and in all of them he found his mother an interested listener and sympathizer.

And that night the boy retired full of hope.

Very early the next morning he set out to walk to the village, and in good time reached the Elm Tree, where the cart stood ready to set out.

Mrs. Potts, who was waiting for him through her window, now came to speak to him.

"I hope I didn't keep the cart waiting, ma'am?" said Owen.

"Oh, no, my boy! It has just driven around from the stable-yard. Although, Owen, my lad, I would have willingly kept it waiting for your sake. There now! jump up beside the driver and be off with you."

Owen thanked her, and obeyed her, and then requested the driver to drive to Mr. Lacy's shop.

When they stopped there they saw a huge square box before the door. Mr. Lacy came out with a written paper in his hand.

"Good morning, Owen."

"Good morning, sir."

"Here, Owen, are your goods in this large box; and here in my hand is a list of the articles, with the wholesale price affixed to each item."

"Yes, sir; thank you."

"And now listen to me, Owen. Come this way."

Owen jumped out of the cart and followed Mr. Lacy out of hearing of the driver.

"Owen," he said, sinking his voice to a whisper, "attend to what I am going to say to you. I always charge thirty-three and a third per cent. on the wholesale price of everything I sell in retail; but you may demand thirty-five."

"Justly, sir?"

"Yes, Owen, justly; else I would not favour your doing it."

"I know you would not, sir."

"Listen, and I will tell you why you may have a higher per centage on your goods than I have on mine. I sell to people who come to me to buy, and often come from long distances in the country, too; therefore I must sell at a moderate profit. But you travel far and wide through the country to wait upon people at their own houses; and in that way you save them time and trouble in coming to the village to deal; while you expend your own time and trouble in going to them. For your labour, as well as for your goods, you must be paid, Owen. And therefore you must have a high profit."

"Yes, sir—I see."

Mr. Lacy then called his porter to help the driver lift the large box on to the cart.

And when it was done he shook hands with Owen, saying:

"Heaven bless you, my brave little fellow, and make you as successful as you certainly deserve to be."

Owen thanked him heartily and jumped to his seat beside the driver, and the cart was driven off.

On their way out of the village, Owen, ever sociable, entered into conversation with the man, who told him that his—the man's—mistress had bought a farm out beyond Forest Lodge; and that a part of it lay in wild woodland, which she was having cleared, and she sent the cart every day to bring home the wood as it

was cut, to be piled up in the inn-yard and used as fuel.

In due time they reached Forest Lodge, where the driver, with the help of Nancy, succeeded in lifting the large box from the cart and getting it, by short stages, into the house and then into the old drawing-room.

The driver then went on his way.

And Owen and Nancy, with hammer and chisel, contrived to rip off the top of the box and display the contents.

These at first view seemed to consist of other boxes of all sizes, shapes, and colours—round boxes, square boxes, and long boxes; red boxes, blue boxes, and yellow boxes.

But when these in their turn were examined, it was discovered that the whole consignment comprised the best selected assortment of goods that could possibly be thought of for a country pedlar's pack.

First, every article in the lot was light, portable, indispensable to family comfort, and in daily requisition in every household, rich or poor. There were sewing materials of every description—needles, pins, scissors, thimbles; thread, cotton, silk, and worsted; tapes, cords, bobbin, and braiding. And there were writing materials—paper, pens, and ink; pencils, wax, and wafers. And there were dressing conveniences—combs, brushes, soaps, powders, pomatum, and tooth-paste. And there was a light and portable assortment of dry-goods—book muslin for ladies' caps, laces, ribbons, pocket handkerchiefs, and so forth.

"Mother, dear, I can easily carry five pounds' worth of these goods at a time, and I do think I shall make a clear profit of five shillings a day."

"I think so, too, Owen," said Amy.

"And, oh, mother! I have just thought of something," said the boy, as he turned over a mass of nets, laces, and ribbons.

"What is it, Owen?"

"Why, that you have such a taste for making pretty things to wear; and here are so many more materials than I could carry out in a great while, so I just thought if you could stop doing that plain sewing that tires you so much and brings you so little, and if you could make up some of this pretty lace and ribbon into ladies' caps and collars, it would be so much lighter and nicer to do, and would pay you so much better, for I would take them around with my other wares to sell."

"That is a very bright idea, Owen! I will act upon it at once," said Amy, eagerly.

And she selected some lace, and net, and ribbon, and carried them to her work-stand by the fire.

"Are you going to begin now, mother?"

"Yes, dear. I really enjoy working on these pretty materials. And I can make up several sets of collars and sleeves to-day, so that you can take them out with you to-morrow. And if you succeed in selling them, Owen, I will only finish what plain sewing I have on hand, and then devote my leisure to this sort of work," said Amy, as her white fingers fluttered about among cobweb lace and bright-lined ribbons.

"And now I must make up my pack," said Owen, spreading a large piece of oil-cloth upon the floor and laying a piece of white cotton over it to receive the miscellaneous articles.

"And I must go and see if my irons is hot! There's my ironing all waiting," said Nancy, starting to leave the room.

"No you don't. Come here, Nancy! I want your advice. Help me to look over these things; and then you point out every thing that house-keepers can't possibly do without."

Nancy, well pleased to have her judgment appealed to, willingly let her work wait, while with her arms akimbo, she stood over Owen's wares and watched and directed him in the making up of his pack.

And generally Owen followed her counsels, for one of the elements of his success was his willingness to be taught anything that concerned his business by anybody who could teach him.

And so, while Amy worked away busily and happily among the fine lace and gay ribbons, and Owen made up his pack, and Nancy gave her advice, the day passed away.

It was quite late in the afternoon when Owen finished his work, and strapped up his pack and returned the rest of the goods to the big box, and with the help of Nancy dragged it from the drawing-room to his own chamber, where it would be out of the way.

"Now, then, mother dear, my pack is all ready. But I have left out a small hand-box, to put these pretty things of yours in; and when you put them in, I can strap the box to the outside of my pack, so the things can't be rumpled," said Owen, standing beside his mother's workstand, and watching her attractive work.

"Yes, dear; I wish to finish three sets of these sleeves and collars—one with pink ribbon, one with

blue, and one with yellow; and I shall be able to do it long before bed-time," said Amy, sewing away. Amy finished her task just as supper was ready to go on the table.

And soon after that the family retired to bed, so as to be up very early in the morning, to see Owen off.

Oh, but the next day was ushered in with a noteworthy wind! one of those winds in which "navies are stranded" and "forests are rended."

But it was not strong enough to prevent Owen from going forth to seek his fortune that day.

Nancy would have persuaded him to stop in the house.

"Child, it will blow the very hair off your head!" she said.

The old house shook as though it were bombarded; the windows rattled like discharges of musketry; the doors and shutters banged and thundered like bombshells!

But Owen declared that he rather liked the storm than otherwise.

Amy secretly wished her little son to stay at home; but she refrained from laying her commands on him to do so.

So directly after breakfast Owen put on his cloak and cap, strapped his pack upon his shoulders, kissed everybody all round, and gleefully set forth.

Amy and Nancy stood at the window and watched him, as he crunched on over the hard frozen snow and against the north wind, with his pack on his back, his cloak blown about him, and his head bent to the blast.

Nancy spoke:

"Tell you what, that boy is gone to seek his fortune, and mind what I tell you—he'll find his fortune!"

(To be continued.)

ALL the newspapers have received orders not to produce a letter about *Cesar* which appeared a few evenings back in one of their contemporaries. Finally, "a man in black" has been round to all the principal journals, requiring them to state by whom they intend to have the book criticised, and in one case the editor of a journal was "ordered" to take a certain person in preference to one of his staff whom he had selected. All these circumstances have instilled what Government people call "salutary terror" into journalists, and so we must expect that the critical articles of the Paris newspapers on *Cesar* will be very mild indeed.

THE weather-worn and ancient tower of Julius *Cesar*, at Windsor-terrace, better known as the "Belfry Tower," is being repaired, and the window openings and loopholes which light what were once the dungeons of the prisoners confined at the Royal pleasure are being encased with new stone, while the walls facing Thames Street have been strengthened here and there where required by the insertion of new work. Portions of the building in the Horse Shoe Cloisters, which abut upon the wall at this point, have also been restored, and new stone windows inserted more in accordance with the general style of the architecture of the Castle than those which have been removed.

THE GOLDEN LILY OF JAPAN.—Several specimens of this rare and gorgeous exotic are on exhibition at the mechanic's fair, San Francisco. It is thus described:—Imagine upon the end of a purple stem, no thicker than a ramrod, and not above two feet high, a saucer-shaped flower, at least ten inches in diameter, composed of six spreading and somewhat crisp petals, rolled back at their points, and having an ivory white skin, thickly strewn with purple points of studs, and oval or roundish prominent purple stains. To this add in the middle of each six yellow parts a broad stripe of light, satiny skin, and having the appearance of streamlets. From this delicious flower arises the perfume of orange blossoms sufficient to fill a large room, but so delicate as to respect the weakest nerves.

TAKING COLD.—A "cold" is not necessarily the result of low or high temperature. A person may go from a hot bath directly into a cold one, or into snow even, and not take cold. He may remain out in the coldest atmosphere until chilled through, and still not take cold. On the contrary, he may take cold by pouring a couple of table-spoonfuls of water upon some parts of his dress, or by standing in a door, or before a stove, or by sitting near a window or other opening, where one part of the body is colder than another part. Let it be kept in mind that uniformity of temperature over the whole body is the great thing to be looked after. It is the unequal heat upon different parts of the body that produces colds, by disturbing the uniform circulation of the blood, which in turn induces congestion of some part. If you must keep a partially wet garment on, it would perhaps be as well to wet the whole of it uniformly. The feet are the great source of cold, on account of the variable temperature they are sub-

jected to. Keep these always dry and warm, and avoid draughts of air, hot or cold, wet spots on the garments, and other direct causes of unequal temperature, and keep the system braced up by plenty of sleep, and the eschewing of debilitating foods and drinks, and you will be proof against a cold and its results.

PATRIOTIC FUND.—The annual report of the state of the Patriotic Fund for the relief of the widows and orphans of those who lost their lives in the late war with Russia has been laid before Parliament. The contributions received amounted to £1,459,734, and it is stated that a further sum of about £5,000 might be expected from a bequest made by the widow of a Paymaster of the Royal Marines, besides what may now come from the Rodriguez bequest. The expenditure to the end of 1893 amounted to £627,202. In April last there were upon the pension list 150 widows of officers receiving £5,443 a year from the fund; 3,119 widows of non-commissioned officers and men receiving £33,894 a year; 3,443 orphan children, of whom 290 were in the Victoria Asylum, and to the remaining £133 was appropriated £28,817 a year; also 251 orphan children of officers, £5,169 a year; to which must be added £7,380 for apprentice premiums, outfits, and management, this latter item amounting to £2,380 a year. Mr. Finkelson estimates that in April last the liabilities of the fund will be, in present value, £798,879, and the value of the assets will be £931,143, showing a probable surplus of £132,264.

LILLIAN VERNON'S COMPANION.

CHAPTER I.

"No; you do not disturb me, Veronica; come in." But the speaker did not move from the couch on which she half reclined, to greet the new-comer. The girl called Veronica glided softly—stealthily, you might almost have called it—across the gorgeous carpet, and placed her arm caressingly about the lady's form.

"You have good news?" and her keen, gray eyes bent eagerly over a letter which her friend held. Lillian Vernon did not speak for a moment, though she clasped the hand that lay upon her shoulder. It was as if a bright morning dream, which she feared to dispel, had bound her with its mild thrall.

There was a soft light in her gentle eyes; and a sigh, low and tremulous, yet not of pain, parted her lips. It seemed to recall her once more from whatever reveries she had indulged; but still she did not move, and spoke with downcast eyes, and a voice so subdued that Veronica knew the memory of pleasant thoughts yet lingered.

"I have a letter from Charles Herbert, my father's ward. I have not heard from him for years—yes, it is years since he sent me that little casket from Venice. It stands upon my dressing-table, Veronica. He was leading an idle life then; and his letters to my poor brother were filled with descriptions of gorgeous *fêtes* and beautiful women, and moonlight seas. How he loved the beautiful! Harry and he were such friends! And then Harry died; and my father, who is so proud and cold, they never wrote except on business; and at last Charles ceased to speak of me in his hurried letters. He is coming to England again."

Veronica did not answer. She waited as if to hear more.

"He is come, I should have said; and he will be here, in this very house, to-night. He wrote so kindly! I thought he had forgotten me, but he is just the same as ever. I wonder if he will think me altered. He says he hopes to find me the same; but I am a woman now, and he left me a school-girl. Oh, Veronica, he is so handsome! Did you ever wish to be beautiful, Veronica?—to have those who looked upon you confess that you were so, with involuntary homage? Somehow, I could almost wish it for myself this afternoon. Charles loves all that is lovely."

If Lillian's eyes had been upraised, she would have seen a shadow, dark and almost malignant, pass over the face that bent above her.

Ungraceful in person, and cold in her exterior, the companion and dependent of the heiress of Hollywood had often cursed in her heart the adverse fate that had denied her all external attractions.

Often, as she had wreathed the beautiful curls, of whose grace Lillian was unconscious, or arrayed the form, whose every motion was grace itself, a bitter, envious thought poisoned the better feelings of her nature, until she had almost come to hate the gentle girl, who loved and trusted her with all the earnestness of an affectionate, guileless nature.

"Fortune, beauty, love, all showered upon her," Veronica had murmured; "while I, born her equal, must rest in obscurity, because a tithing of these gifts has been denied me. Oh, if I were but beautiful, how

I would win men's hearts! How they should acknowledge the spell of my presence, and bow down before me, forgetful that my loveliness was my only dowry!"

And then a mirror would reflect a face pale with envy, and features harsh and contracted.

Alas, for Veronica! She remembered Charles Herbert. Could she ever forget him? For in his rude boyhood he had taunted her with her dependence—she could have borne that—and of her plainness, of which she hated even then to hear.

She could recall every incident of that scene—his frank, manly face, and her own glance of defiance.

"So he was coming home, and no doubt would woo and win his old playfellow. He was Sir Charles Herbert now, though Lillian had forgotten that." Thus ran Veronica's thoughts. "And she will be mistress of all her father's wealth, and I, still in the shadow, must stand by and see the bridal pageant, and guard the jewels that she is now to wear, and smile when I could weep, and bless when my heart curses!"

It is sad to see a human heart given up to such evil guidance; but it was the festering thought of a lifetime, and Veronica was a rare dissembler.

"Nay, confess it," she cried, playfully, as she still looked down upon the letter, filled with kindly words and glad anticipations; "you love your father's ward, Lillian? Your brother's friend—that is not all. Well, you will be happy, for he could not refuse such homage."

"I offer him homage! But you are jesting?"

"Nay; do you think I have been blinded all this while to the love-dream that filled your heart? There are orange-flowers in that little casket, withered, it is true—but Sir Charles gave them to you ere he sailed from England. There is a curl of brown hair beneath the velvet cushion; it is marvellously like some curls I have seen on his forehead. And perhaps you forget standing before the picture that hung in your brother's room, ere it was closed, and sighing as you turned away?"

No wonder that Lillian blushed, and withdrew her hand impatiently.

"And your eyes will welcome him back again; and your hands may finish the conquest," she half-murmured.

"There, go, Veronica; my eyes shall never tell unbidden secrets. Did I not love you so well, I could chide you for speaking thus. I hear a bustle in the courtyard. I am not ready to receive my father's guests—you must do it for me. They have entered the drawing-room."

It needed not Lillian's impatient entreaties, for Veronica's heart beat fast with the wish to see Charles Herbert first, alone; and yet she complied as one who confers a favour.

Then Lillian sank back upon the couch once more, and seemed to forget what was required of her. The rich fall of lace trembled to the quick beatings of her heart, and her hands clasped the letter nervously.

She listened eagerly to catch the sound of voices below; but there was nothing save the tramping of the steeds in the courtyard, and the murmur of the summer fountain that played beneath her window.

"Veronica spoke strangely," thought she. "Have I been unkindly? Have I given my love unsought? Have I cherished other than a sister's love for Charles? I cannot tell; I do not know myself this afternoon. But I will be cold and formal. Yes, my father's own child; and thus I will atone. Charles!"

The name was spoken with a lingering accent, as her reverie ceased; nor was the lady conscious how much that little word revealed.

She rose, and stood before the mirror to adjust her robe.

She drew one sprig of starry white jasmine from a vase before her, to twine among her curls, and in another moment had glided down the old oak staircase, already dusky with evening shadows, and stood before the object of her thoughts.

She gave her hand lightly to a tall, dark-browed stranger, so different from the Charles of her memory, who bowed as haughtily as her father could have done, and led her to a seat.

How coldly his formal inquiries fell upon her ear! the measured tone was an unfamiliar sound. Her heart that had fluttered so wildly, sunk frozen in her breast.

Poor Lillian! They had parted as brother and sister part, with a kiss and a loving clasp! She would have shrunk from either, now, it is true; but the kind letter, hid beneath her silken bodice, had not prepared her for this unlooked-for coldness.

The weary moments passed heavily, and Veronica supported the lagging conversation, in which neither of the others seemed to take interest.

For once, Lillian was glad to hear the firm, heavy

tread of her father sounding in the hall, and half sprang forward to meet him; but a thought seemed to check her, and she paused at the entrance, more embarrassed than ever before.

Mr. Vernon was, as Lillian had characterized him, stern and proud. There was strength in his compact figure and massive head. Masses of thick hair, now beginning to silver, were pushed back from his square forehead; and his mouth had a resolute compression, that did not relax as he bid the young stranger welcome.

There was little sociability added to the group by his entrance, and when, after a dull and formal evening, they separated, all felt the relief of once more being alone.

"Dull enough, and cold enough!" muttered Sir Charles, as he stood by the open window of his own apartment, looking out upon the exquisite landscape before him.

The moonlight shone clear upon the dark recesses of foliage that enclosed the beautiful lawn, and in soft, fantastic shadows lay on the velvet turf, quivering with every breath of the summer wind.

The dun deer slept peacefully in their sheltered coveries, and afar off the white cottages of the village were visible.

"No! no! nothing else is changed," went on the soliloquy, "except that Harry, my old play-fellow, is not here to welcome me. There is the spire of the village church, where he sleeps. It might be better if I slept by his side. This bright dream of love that I have cherished through all the long years of my wanderings, has vanished. I awake, and find nothing but withered flowers, where I expected to find sweet and fresh blossoms. Poor Harry—I saw his smile when Lillian sprang to meet her father. How this chilled me. I had hoped for a woman's greeting; but perhaps I have been among the children of the sunny South so long that I have forgotten English coldness. She might have one smile for her brother's old friend. That Veronica—she's not altered. The same stealthy tread, that quick, upward glance, when she thinks herself unobserved. She always came between Lillian and myself in the old days; perhaps this is why I have shunned her. How very, very beautiful Lillian has grown; those soft, clustering curls—the downcast eyes—the floating, sylph-like motion—and yet so womanly withal! She is like the hand I half-worshipped in Florence—that soft Carlo Dolce that hung in the east window. I wish her manner and soul were more unlike her father's. She should have her mother's spirit, with her mother's eyes. Ah, well—this tiresome visit will soon be ended, and then I will lay down my dream, and forget all, under sunnier skies."

CHAPTER II.

AND so the days went on at Hollywood—Sir Charles coldly, serenely courteous, and Lillian as distant as first in her stately bearing. Veronica hovered like a shadow ever near them; for when business was over, Mr. Vernon was invisible, save at dinner, for the rest of the day.

It was the settlement of a tedious lawsuit, in which the estate of Sir Charles had been involved, which had called him to England.

Perhaps his heart beat a little faster when he heard that Lillian was still unmarried, and had far exceeded her girlish loveliness.

He may have had a dream of turning from the gay, idle life in which he had passed so many years, and making his English home a paradise, whose Eve had the sweet mouth and gentle ways of his old play-fellow.

But that was passed now, and he fretted impatiently at the chain in which "the law's delay" had bound him for many weeks at Hollywood.

Now and then he would fancy Lillian less cold, and his own iciness gave way before it. Sometimes, when strolling side by side through the dim old paths they had loved so well in years gone by, they would speak of those old days, and wish that they would return again.

Once they talked of Harry, and Sir Charles felt the hand that lay upon his arm tremble, and thought the old confidence might be again established.

But just then they came suddenly on Veronica, and both turned instinctively from the theme of their discourse.

"Nay, do not talk to me of Charles," Lillian had said that night; "he has brought his fine Italian manners, and I like them not. My father must see it, for he shuns him, and I—Oh, Veronica, he was not so once!"

And when the girl was gone, she took a slender key from the chain which she always wore, and unlocked the Venetian casement.

It was empty, save those few faded flowers she had cherished.

She took them with an impatient gesture, as if she

would have trampled them under her feet; but a tear fell on them.

They were pressed to her lips an instant, and then returned to their hiding-place.

"No, no; I cannot destroy them now," she said. "Harry stood near when he gave them to me; I will keep them for my brother's sake."

Sir Charles was already in the breakfast-room, as she entered the next morning. Could she be mistaken in thinking that he smiled more kindly, when he bade her "good morning?" Certain it was that he held her little prisoned hand a moment, and drew her towards the open window.

"How very beautiful that far-off winding road looks in this fresh morning light," said he. "I was just thinking how often we have cantered over it, and wondering if the copses and the heath through which it wound are as leafy and green as ever. I even had bolder thoughts, for I was wondering if I might not be permitted to accompany Miss Vernon in her evening ride, and find myself if it were so."

It was hard to repress the joy that came gushing to her heart at these words; but Lillian had strong self-control, and she only bowed an assent.

"And Veronica?" he added, in a tone of inquiry.

"Poor Veronica," replied Lillian. "She will not leave her room to-day. She is ill, and has been so for a week past, but would not confess it. I have noticed her burning hands and flushed cheek, and now I will not consent to her rising until Dr. Linton has been consulted."

A new light came into the eyes that bent over her as she spoke. It was plain that Sir Charles was not anxious for the invalid's recovery.

"Poor Veronica!" Lillian said to herself a hundred times that morning; and yet she seemed to feel her absence a relief—she knew not how or wherefore.

How anxiously she watched a dark, portentous cloud that rolled slowly from the west as dinner was announced! But she would not believe that a shower was at hand, as she ordered the horses. More than once during the interminable meal, she looked anxiously toward the window, to watch its progress. Her father chided her more than once for her thoughtlessness, and once looked almost angrily towards her, as her trembling hand spilled the wine she was raising to her lips.

It was just as her ear caught the first long, low muttering of the far-off storm. It was sweeping down in all its wrath, when Sir Charles was released from his attendance upon Mr. Vernon, and joined her in the drawing-room. There was no denying it now; the ride must be given up—and gloomily enough they watched the horses led away.

But, after all, it was a very pleasant evening. There was a sense of comfort when the rain beat against the windows, when the heavily-draped curtains excluded all but the voice of the storm; for the fire, which the chilliness of the air made most grateful, blazed cheerily upward.

Sir Charles sat near his fair hostess, and watched the colours that her skilful hands mingled in delicate embroidery over which she bent.

They did not talk much, but the silence was not oppressive; and, as the evening came on, Lillian sang the simple ballads he could so well remember, when she first commenced to mingle the rich notes of her voice with the melody of the "light guitar."

Lillian started at last, with a feeling of self-reproach, that she had left Veronica alone so long; and then the formal separation was exchanged for the briefer "good-night," which may be made to say so much.

With all her remorseful pangs, Lillian did not linger long at the bedside of the fretful invalid, and when in her own room, the little casket was held once more in her hands.

She awoke the next morning, with that half-dreamy, yet undefined consciousness that something pleasant had occurred, which all can recognize; and when she remembered why she was glad to see the cheerful sunshine come streaming into her room, she sprang from her couch, and commenced a hurried toilet.

Veronica's fever had not abated; indeed, a sleepless, restless night had quickened her already rapid pulse, and, though she moaned impatiently at the durance, she was obliged to give up all thought of breakfasting below.

Let something might again frustrate their project, Sir Charles petitioned a morning ride.

How very beautiful Lillian was, as she came bounding down the stone steps, with a childlike, graceful movement, her habit gathered over her arm, to caress the noble steed that acknowledged the hand of his gentle mistress.

Sir Charles could have kissed the dainty foot he held for an instant in his hand, as she vaulted to the saddle; and in one moment more they were lost in the green vista that opened before them. They did not know from what a wild, strange gaze they were thus hidden; but the "evil eyes" were those of Ve-

ronica, whose lips trembled as she fell back once more upon her pillow.

The spell could not pursue them, that cloudless, sun-bright morning.

The air was loaded with fragrance from the blooming hedges, and the rich clover fields by which they passed; a bird-song thrilled through the copse before them, and far away the smoke-wreaths of the hamlet curled lazily upwards.

There was excitement to horse and rider, as on they swept, Lillian's curls floating back with the dark plume that fell upon her shoulders, and her eyes sparkled with a clear, joyous light, Sir Charles had not seen in them for many a day. After a time their road lay through an old forest, where the sunlight and bird-song were softened; while, almost unconsciously, they reined their steeds, and side by side rode on more quietly.

What a time, in the grand old wood, to tell

The love that with steady strength did well

From his heart, that knew nought but love for her.

There was enchantment in the very atmosphere—in the solemn emerald light, in the soft shadows that trembled across their pathway. Then they heard the murmur of a little brook, and Sir Charles dismounted, while his steed bent to drink. It was a pleasant, grassy glade, through which the brook sparkled, and Lillian needed no second invitation to rest awhile in its shade. But she gathered wild flowers—while Sir Charles stood beside her only to crush them—and quite unconsciously dipped that pretty foot into the stream before her. Imprudent Lillian!

At last she was again seated in the saddle, and she gathered the reins through her slender hands. But Sir Charles did not seem disposed to yield them, and stood leaning against a beech-tree, and looking up into the fair face that bent over him.

"Do you know what a happy dream I had," he said, at length, "as we sat on the bank together? It was the memory of days long vanished, when a blue-eyed fairy child first stood trembling with fear, at mounting a steed like this. I saw those blue eyes fill with tears, and turn to me beseechingly. Once more I comforted the trembler, and lifted her to the saddle. Once more I placed the reins in hands almost too tiny to grasp them, and led the steed along, with one of those little hands resting upon my shoulder. Then there was a sweet voice called me 'Dear Charlie!' and I forgot for a moment that I could not take the child in my arms, as I then held her—that she was a woman now, and the pledged wife of another. Dear Lillian, forgive me if I envy him."

"Who? Of whom do you speak, Charles?"

"The child is here no longer—of you, and of your betrothed, the heir of Silvertown."

"My betrothed! You are dreaming now."

"Would that I could find it a dream. But I know full well who claims this hand."

And he kissed it involuntarily as he spoke.

Lillian did not withdraw her hand. Her curls hid the sudden crimson of her cheek as she bent forward, and whispered:

"I see it all now; she lied to you!"

"And you are not to be his bride?"

"Never! I would die first!"

"Dear Lillian!"

And his arm encircled her as of old.

Her head bent still lower. Her heart beat very fast with mingled emotions of excitement and happiness.

The birds heard strange tales that day in Hollywood Forest; and they might have whispered that a bride was won beneath its shadows.

But they could not tell the angry malice of one burning heart, when its treachery was discovered, and Veronica found, with all her lying tales and covert sneers, she could not separate Lillian from her betrothed.

It was indeed she who had placed the barrier between them at their meeting, when Charles came, hoping to win the sister of his friend.

And Lillian's father? For once his sternness vanished, when he clasped Sir Charles in his arms, and called him "son"—the dearest wish of his proud heart fulfilled.

And in due time bridal chimes were rung, though Veronica was not there to hear them; for her evil presence no longer darkened the hearth of Hollywood.

A. A. D.

VEGETABLE FLANNEL.—This fabric has for some time been in considerable demand on the Continent, and is used in place of ordinary flannel, in the case of persons troubled with rheumatism and neuralgic pains, and of those especially whose skin will not bear the irritating action of woollen fibre. Vegetable flannel is a German manufacture, from the *Pinus Sylvestris*. Its introduction is credited to M. Léopold Lairitz; and a large number of persons in the Black Forest are now engaged in the various processes of separating

the oil and the fibre, called *scaldaöld*, or forest wool, from the pine leaves, and of spinning, weaving, and knitting the yarn. As regards the hygienic qualities of the vegetable flannel, Dr. Hoppe, of the University of Biele, and other scientific men, rate them very highly. Baths of Pine leaves have long been used in Germany and Switzerland in cases of rheumatic affection, and the vegetable flannel is believed, like the baths, to have an immense power in establishing the functions of the skin when they have been interfered with by accidental causes. This result is attributed to the presence of formic acid—which creates a gentle and constant excitement of the skin—and of the tannin and resinous principles which are absorbed by cutaneous action, and supply the necessary elements for restoring a healthy condition.

COST OF THE SHEFFIELD INUNDATION COMMISSION.

—The cost of the inundation commission sitting in Sheffield is declared by a local paper to be at the rate of one guinea per minute, exclusive of the large sums paid by sufferers and others who are acting in opposition to the water company. It is estimated that the commission will, by the time it has finished its labours, have cost the company £50,000.

SINGULAR TERRITORIAL DISPUTE BETWEEN THE QUEEN AND THE PRINCE OF WALES.

THE Duchy of Cornwall has for many generations belonged to the Prince of Wales, or to the Sovereign when there was no such prince. The present Prince, for instance, is a little king in that county, with a little cabinet of ministers of his own. He nominates the sheriffs, he sits in council to hear appeals from the decisions of the Lord Warden of the Stanneries (or tin-miners' court); and he obtains rents or royalties from the workers of mines in various parts of the duchy, and from the occupiers of property of various kinds.

The income, after defraying every expense, leaves a snug fifty thousand pounds a-year net, to help Albert Edward and Alexandra to pay their housekeeping bills. Long may they live to enjoy it! But this is not the point; we must stick to the mad. The Queen claims the foreshore of Cornwall as well as that of all other parts of her dominions, and she claims also the ownership of the bed of the sea itself to a certain distance around her islands.

Of the three parallel strips, the dry shore is owned by some landowner or other; the foreshore, or alternately wet-and-dry strip, is claimed by the Queen; and the strip which is always under the sea is claimed by her Majesty also. But, lo! in one south-westernmost country a difficulty has more than once arisen. The Prince of Wales, through his law officers, has told his royal mother that, however dutiful he wished to be, he must claim certain sovereign rights over the sea-margin of his duchy. The Queen, through her law officers, informs the Prince that, however much she loves him, she must assert her claim to the whole of the sea-margin of Britain.

Now, it happens that, in Cornwall, if a rich vein of tin or copper lies near the coast, the miners will follow it whithersoever it tends, even under the foreshore, and under the bed of the sea. In one memorable instance, the miners actually began a mine at sea, a mile distant from the shore, making a cofferdam to keep out the water, and then beginning to dig when they had laid bare the bed of the sea. In all other cases, however, the under-sea workings are extensions of those which were begun under the dry land. At the famous Botallack Mine, the workings extend under the foreshore, and then six of eight hundred feet under the sea itself, with a crust or roof overhead so thin that the roar of the ocean can be heard. At the Huel Mine, some years ago, the workings were carried so far that the miners had to fly, lest the sea should wash them out altogether by breaking through the thin crust.

It is only within a comparatively recent period that anybody thought of claiming rent or royalty for such a singular mining region as this under the sea. When, however, it came to be acknowledged that mines underneath rivers, foreshore, and the bed of the sea, ought to pay royalty as well as those under dry land, rival claimants to the royalty appeared. The prince as duke, the mother as queen, the prince as sovereign lord of Cornwall, his mother as sovereign lady of the whole realm—which should it be? Very wisely they did not "come into court." The advisers on both sides, knowing that the matter would be a complicated one, gave full powers as arbitrator to one of the learned judges who was more than usually looked up to that kind of lore. How many statutes went over, and decisions and grants, the learned judge went over, and he was afraid to guess; but he ultimately pronounced this award—that the Queen ought to have a right to all the minerals under the sea; whereas the prince has, or ought to have, a right to all the minerals under the mud of the Cornish foreshore.

ALETHE.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Whoa! Stop, old boy! Can't you stop when you get agoin'?" Whoa! Whoa! It was thus that Barnabas addressed his elephant, after they had ridden some time with great swiftness. "What's this a-sid the road, I wonder?" he asked, looking at an object sitting upon the ground.

"A fellow-being," replied a weak voice. "What's the matter of ye?" demanded Barnabas. "Sahib, I have been feully murdered!" responded the man on the ground, in a hollow tone.

"You're more fortinit than some," said Barnabas. "As a general thing, people as is murdered can't tell. Ain't hurt much, I s'pose, by bein' murdered?" "Speak to him more kindly, Mr. Hutton," said Ida.

"It's a native!" muttered Barnabas. "Sahib," returned the other, "I am of a dark skin, but I am none the less your fellow mortal. I have long to live, and therefore will not long detain you."

"Well, native, lay the matter afore us as soon as you can, and afterwards die at your leisure," said Hutton, impatiently.

"My name," resumed the native, is Kassim. "Sorry to see you so poorly, Kassim," quoth Barnabas.

"I shall be better soon," said Kassim. "Brahma will open his arms to me, and I shall be blest. Brahma is the beginning, Brahma is the end."

The voice of the speaker was low and solemn. "It is God who is the beginning and the end," said Ida, compassionately.

"It matters not, lady, whether I call him God or Brahma, Buddha, Vishnu, or Shiva. The Creator is holy, by whatever name. I call him Brahma, and to Brahma I am going."

"I wish you a good journey," said Barnabas. "Let us not detain you. I mean no disrespect to you nor your religion, but our haste is urgent."

"Perchance, Sahib, you may make more speed by day than by haste." He raised his eyes feebly. "I am one here," he went on, "who has lost a daughter."

"Native," cried Rainbold, springing from his horse, "tell me the fate of my daughter, and there is no request I will not grant you."

"What request should I have, Sahib? Am I not coming the black water? Can you take me back, if I ask you? Can you open the river and let me pass through with dry feet? No, Sahib, no! Death comes once to every man, swarthy or white, high or low. And he has come to me. He has come to me like a thief, ay, like a vile and miserable stranger!"

At that instant Bracegirdle came up. Kassim held him with a wondering stare of astonishment. "Not dead, Sahib, not dead!" he murmured. "You should be dead, and I should be dead, too. But that I will shortly be. Look not at me, pale spectre!"

"Listen to me, Sahib. Look at my neck. There is a dark welt around it; it is a mark of the cord of the Thug. It is the fatal sign of the stranger."

Ida shuddered. "Be calm, my dear Miss Macgregor," said Kavanagh. "This," added Kassim, touching his neck, "is the gift of Tilac! Is the gift of Hyderabad! Is the gift of Hurdwar, the son of Meerab!"

"One and the same!" cried Alethe, awed and wonder-stricken. "Crafty dissembler! Arah-hypocrite!"

"These," Kassim went on, "are not his only names. He continually changes name and character. In him dwells the dark spirit of evil. He has employed me often, and deceived me always." He looked at Bracegirdle.

"After you were bitten, Sahib, by the cobra-cello he adroitly placed upon you, and turned backward with the dread of death within you, the fair English girl fled into the jungle. She hid, and Tilac found her not. I only knew the spot where, she crouched, trembling. I saw the rank grass quiver but I revealed it not. I wished not that the black wolf should tear her. The claws of Upas are far less cruel than his. The spirit of Satan that was in him urged him to new crime. He could not rest without sin. So he leaped upon me, noosed the cord around my neck, tore me down, and, standing with his feet on my shoulders, strangled me till I was apparently dead. Perhaps I was dead, and Brahma brought me to life to speak these words to you."

"Call him God!" said Ida, reverently. "Fair English girl," he answered, with humility, "I will call him God, if it please you. I revived, as you see. I crept from the bushes, and here you found me."

"And why may you not live?" asked Ida. "English girl, I bled inwardly. The scarlet stream of life is flowing into my lungs, which will soon be

full. When it reaches my throat, I shall suffocate. I was called back but for a brief period: and I return without regret to the scenes from which I have been transiently recalled."

"But my daughter!—my daughter!" cried the major.

"Sahib, I wish I could restore her to your arms; but I have performed my mission, and can do no more."

His accents were now very weak, and there was a rattling in his throat.

"Beware," he added, speaking with difficulty, "of Tilac, Hyderabad, Hurdwar, the son of Meerab. He appears in all shapes—trust not a shape of them all. Europeans you are warned! Avoid the cord, the dagger, the serpent, the claws of beast, and the poison of the man of drugs."

He stopped again, and seemed muttering prayers. "I go," he faltered, in tones scarcely audible, "to the world of rewards and punishments; to the land of light and the land of darkness!"

Kassim's body swayed to and fro a moment, and then fell lifeless upon the earth.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MAJOR RAINBOLD gazed at the inanimate form of Kassim in doubt and wonder; but Barnabas Hutton, ever active and practical, sprang from his enormous beast, saying:

"Come, Major, come! Let us beat the jungle. We may find the poor girl, perhaps, hereabouts."

"Thank you, my boy, thank you!" said the Major, vacantly.

"My dear guardian," said Ida, anxiously, "do not take this so seriously to heart. I feel assured that Melicent will be restored to us unharmed."

"Bless you! bless you, my good girl!" he answered, looking all the while at Alethe. "Bless you, my sweet child and daughter!"

"How kind he is!" murmured Alethe. "How gently he looks at us! This blow disturbs his mind."

"Kavanagh, my boy," said Barnabas, "stay here with the girls while we look round."

The faithful Hutton and the nearly paralyzed major beat the jungle till morning; when, entirely assured that the object of their search was not in the vicinity, they resumed their way.

They had not travelled far, when they met an old man walking slowly, supporting his bent figure with a staff. His face was pale and wrinkled, his garments tattered and torn. He seemed lost in devout meditation. He scarcely raised his head to return the salutation of Barnabas.

"Let me question him," said Kavanagh. "We may make him useful. Old man, whence come you?"

"European, I neither came from home nor am I going home."

"That means," said Barnabas, "that he hasn't got no home. And I shouldn't think he had; nor nobody to do his mendin', neither."

"I am one that walks up and down the earth, in pursuit of that which I have never seen, and which no one has ever found," added the old man.

"It can't be filth he's arter, for there's enough o' that onto him," quoth Barnabas, humorously.

"I mean Truth," said he of the staff.

"Soap and water would do you more good," sneered Barnabas; for, in fact, the pilgrim was very filthy in his person.

"Holiness," resumed the old man, "regards not the body, but pertains solely to the mind."

"That's Hindoo, clear enough," grumbled Barnabas. "But you needn't tell me that a dirty man was ever a good man; nor a dirty woman a good woman. Dirt and goodness won't mix, nohow. Come, Mr. Kavanagh, you don't get on much with this fellow."

The old man glanced at Upas, and Upas lashed the elephant's back gently with her tail.

"We want a guide, pious pilgrim," said Kavanagh, "to some place of security; no matter how poor it may be; and the more remote from native settlements, the better. We are in extremity, and will reward you liberally for your friendly services."

"It is not my manner of life to meddle with the affairs of men. I seek but the purification of my soul," responded the pilgrim.

"Good actions," replied Kavanagh, "purify the soul."

"European, it may be so; but, usually, holy men cannot stop to perform them. Inform me how I may serve you with less trouble; for, let me tell you, that wandering santons and fakirs hate exertion above all things."

"You shall have your hands filled with rupees," interposed the major, "if you will but lead us to a place of concealment."

"Rupees are good for both saint and sinner," said the old man, thoughtfully. "I know of an old idol

temple, deep in the solitude of a jungle, that is little frequented, save now and then by priests and fakirs. Were it not so far, and were my limbs less weak, I would conduct you thither."

Rainbold took out his purse. "Pay me after my work is done. He works best and most faithfully who works in anticipation of reward."

"By George, that's the most sensible thing you've said, old truth-hunter. If you're the means o' doin' us any good, I'll show ye a spring of water as a reward o' merit," observed Mr. Hutton.

"Decide quickly," said Kavanagh.

"I have decided," replied the fakir. "But my steps are slow, and my limbs feeble. Question me no further, and follow patiently. I will show you the temple."

The old man turned and struck into the jungle. Although Barnabas addressed him several times, he returned no answer.

Leaning on his staff, he walked on at an even, but painfully slow, pace, turning neither to the right nor left, nor once glanced over his shoulder.

When this silent progress had continued an hour, the fakir stopped at the summit of a small eminence and, pointing with his staff, said:

"Europeans, there is the temple."

"And here," said Rainbold, "are the rupees."

"You would deprive me," answered the devotee, "of the merit of a good action. You begrudge me the reward of a charity. I abhor your generosity, and I go my way, leaving the debt to be paid by the gods I serve."

The fakir walked from the spot with no other parting salutation, and while they looked after him, he disappeared among the vines and trees.

Upas growled; her eyes were fixed on the spot where the man had vanished.

"If filth is holiness, I shouldn't want to be no holier nor he is, at the present speakin'."

He mused on that thought a moment.

"What's come over you Lethe?" he asked, suddenly, observing a change in the girl's countenance.

"Nothing, Mr. Barnabas. I felt a slight chill; that was all. Did you notice how Upas's eyes followed the fakir?"

"I don't see the eyes of no Upas when some others are near," returned Mr. Barnabas, gallantly. "But there's the temple. Let us push ahead, and see what's in it."

This being a very reasonable proposal, they quickly approached the gray old temple, where, to their joy and surprise, they were received by a British officer.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE happiness of the parties was very great, when informed by Colonel Argent that Melicent was there, safe and unharmed. One circumstance perplexed them not a little; after entering the temple, they looked around for Raynor Bracegirdle, and perceived that he was not with them. Hastening back to the steps, Barnabas saw him riding away; nor did he, truth to tell, regret his departure; while the others heartily rejoiced, not one being able to tolerate his presence.

His going, though unexpected, was not the less a welcome event. It was the last that Major Rainbold saw of the son of his friend.

General gratitude and great good feeling prevailed. The ladies at the temple received this new acquisition to their numbers with unfeigned satisfaction. Barnabas, the major, and Kavanagh added materially to the strength of the little garrison.

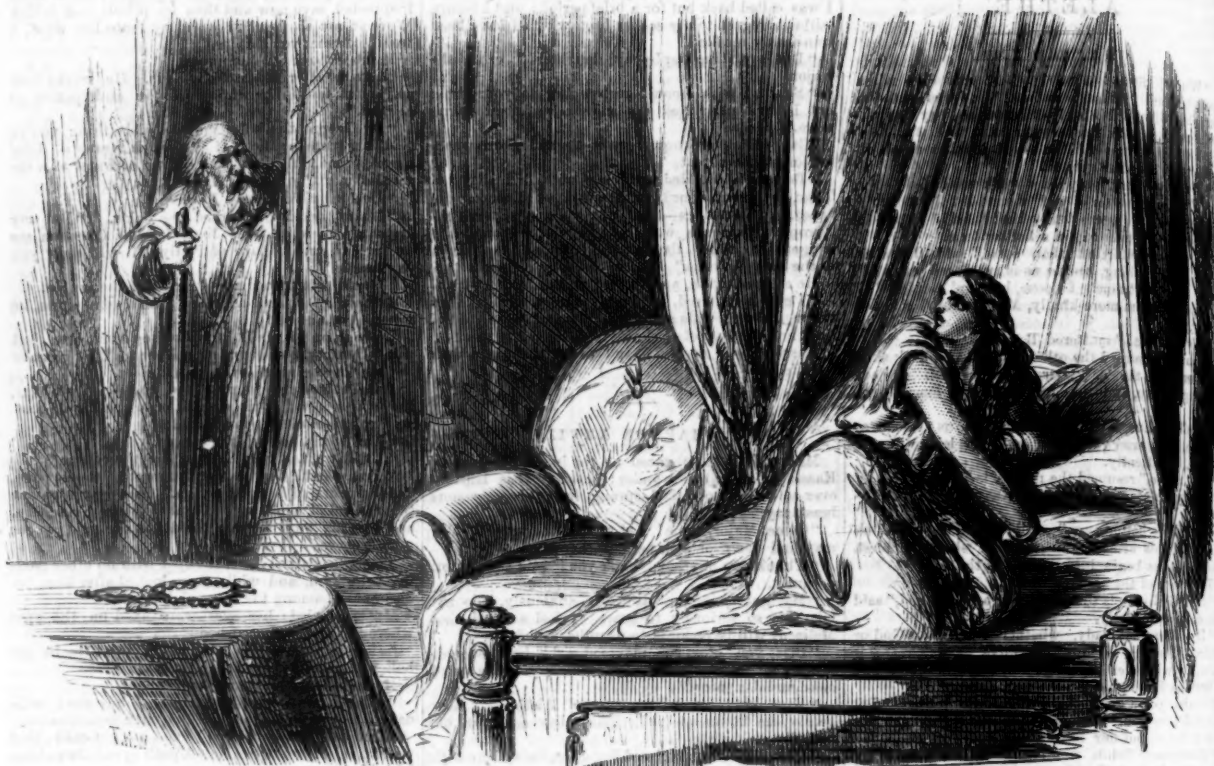
The walls of the building being firm and thick, could resist any attack, almost that could be made without artillery; while a few sharpshooters, stationed at windows could pick off an enemy with great ease. Matters of this nature were discussed by the gentlemen, while the ladies listened to Ida's description of their flight with lively interest.

Each retired to rest the ensuing night, with feelings of safety and gratitude that were the best promoters of sleep.

Alethe was just sinking to repose, when a slight scratching at the door attracted her attention. She instantly remembered that Upas had been shut in one of the neglected apartments of the temple, and forgotten. She arose and admitted her. Her demonstrations of pleasure were such, that Alethe allowed her to remain.

Across one side of the room that had been assigned her, there were several niches, or small recesses, before which hung curtains of sombre stuff, pictured with uncouth images. The niches had probably been used for some of the services of idolatry.

Alethe was glad to see Upas, after she had testified her joy at the meeting, retire into one of these and lie down. She felt safer for having this dumb companionship; for the place, to her was unpleasantly lonely. The associations were not of a pleasing kind. What



[THE OLD FAKIR.]

dark rites might not have been performed in that room? It was unnaturally chilly, she thought, and there was a supernatural awe about it.

She sank upon the simple couch that had been provided for her, without disrobing, and gazed at the pale light of her small lamp a long time. Finding that she could not sleep, she arose to open a door connecting it with Melicent's and Ida's apartments. She had remained beside them till they had both passed into gentle slumbers, and then crept to her own couch in the room we have mentioned. On trying the door to her surprise she found it fastened; nor would it yield to her endeavours to open it. This struck her as being exceedingly singular; for she had opened and closed it several times that night without any difficulty.

She next tried the door communicating with the halls and passages, and finding it as she had left it, returned to her bed. An hour, perhaps, passed, and her eyes were growing heavy, when she heard a sliding, rolling movement in the wall, and looking, curiously toward the recesses, saw one of the curtains move. She watched it for a moment, and it became still, but presently vibrated more than before, then was pushed aside, and a figure appeared. It was the old devotee who had guided them to the temple. He wore the same tattered garments, and leaned upon his staff as he stood glancing around him.

Alethe was terrified. A secret dread of the old man had been upon her when they met before, and now that dread was a hundred fold increased. She lay silent, almost breathless on the couch.

The fakir slowly turned toward her.

"Arise," he said in an authoritative tone, "and come with me!"

Alethe did not stir; she could not. Her person was paralyzed with fear.

"Hearest thou not?" he added, with severity. "Hast thou not the blood of our people in thy veins? Wilt thou go after strange gods?"

Alethe's wonder grew greater, and the man before her more terrific.

"To thy feet, degenerate daughter and follow me!" The girl began to gain strength, if not courage. She answered:

"Go hence, old man, or I will call those who will speedily expel you!"

"You can call no one. Should you now try the doors, you will find them both immovable as the walls."

"Treachery! treachery!" cried Alethe, starting up. "Call not! No one can take you from me. I have come for you, and you shall go."

His manner was now threatening, his voice harsh. He advanced.

"Who are you?" cried Alethe, retreating.

"Look at me, and see! Do not these rags witness for me?"

He lifted his eyes full upon hers, and his darting eyeballs swam in great orbs of white.

"No you are not that!" answered Alethe, shrinking and edging towards the nearest recess. She heard a little growl, but the old man did not hear it.

"If I am not what I have said, who am I?" he asked with a sneer and a laugh.

"You are Hurdwar! You are Hyderabad! You are Tilac, the son of Meerab!" exclaimed Alethe. She retreated still further. Her fixed and stony face was whiter than a European's.

"I am more than this," he answered, coldly, and with a sardonic smile. "I am Satan! I am the incarnate spirit of evil. Yours are the only eyes in India that could have detected me."

He glared at her like a savage beast.

"You are all that you have named; and more, if that may be. But I have seen your changes these many years. From childhood you have crossed my path. You have appeared first in one shape, then in another; but in all forms you have been malignant," answered Alethe, her cheeks beginning to flush, and her voice to gather energy.

"What you have said, girl, is but truth. But I came not to talk truths. Come! we part not now. We go hence together. You will become mine; you will partake of my spirit; you will become partner in my nature. You, too, will become the habitation of evil. Satan will live in me, and in thee. The malevolence within me is becoming too great for one body; there must be two. You are that other, consecrated to evil for ever-mere!"

He threw off his rags like lightning, passed his hands over his face, cast off his white locks, and stood before her—Hydrabad! The great carbuncle flamed at his throat, and the little lamp and every object in the room was reflected in the moonstone in the handle of his dagger. His lips parted; he rubbed the stain of the beetle-juice from his teeth, and showed them white and ravenous. He did not laugh, but his smile was pitiless as ice.

"I thank you, Hydrabad, that you appear to me thus. Open truth is better than concealed hypocrisy. A horror known is better than a horror suspected. A fear realized is better than a fear dreaded. The extremity of my peril drives me to strength. I rebound from my weakness. I scorn, I defy, I unspeakably loathe you!"

She raised her arm—she menaced him with her finger.

"Satan," she added, "will never be divided between us. Evil will never dwell conjointly in you and me. Tremble, Hyderabad, for your hour has come!"

There was a solemn pause. The dark features of Hyderabad grew darker. His figure swelled and erected itself with disdainful pride, till he indeed seemed Satan, robbed of his awful majesty and divine effulgence.

"Foolish child!" he retorted, with lofty scorn. "I admire your daring spirit and the burning fervour of your anger; but with Hyderabad you cannot contend. Slay this body, and I should come again in another. I am not a man, but a principle."

For the first time since she had known him, Hyderabad laughed aloud, and his laughter fell upon her ears like a sinistrous shout of triumph.

She doubted Upas—she doubted herself.

"Your presumption goes too far," she said, concealing her misgivings. "The cunning are taken in their own craftiness. They are taken in the snare they have laid for another. Hyderabad, I said truly, your hour has come!"

He now stared at her in real wonder.

"Upas, Upas!"

The curtain stirred.

"Upas, Upas!"

The tigress sprang out in a flaming fury.

Hydrabad's swarthy visage grew sallow.

"Kill him, kill him!" cried Alethe, raising both her arms, and pointing and looking at Hyderabad.

The light and graceful body of Upas quivered an instant, then it launched upon Hyderabad. There was a momentary conflict. Alethe heard groans and curses.

Both man and beast glanced on her sight like shadows.

There was a sliding sound in the wall, and the girl, raising her shuddering eyes, beheld only Upas. But there were pools of blood on the floor, fragments of garments, a dagger with a moonstone in the handle, and near one of the recesses, a silken cord and the carbuncle that had flamed at Hyderabad's throat.

Upas crouched at the feet of her mistress.

She looked up at her for approval, with her red tongue out, and the heat and glow of the encounter upon her.

Alethe fell upon her knees, cast her arms around the neck of Upas, and wept upon her glossy head.

(To be continued.)



[MADGE COOTER PARTING WITH FRANK.]

THE SEVENTH MARRIAGE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"The Warning Voice," "Man and his Idol," "Mrs. Larkall's Boarding School," &c.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN.

Alas! why gnaw you so your nether lip?
Some bloody passion shakes your very frame!

Othello.

On the morning after it was written, Imrac Garmeson's singular letter, from Canterbury, reached the no less singular being, the Count Rosario, to whom it was addressed.

It found him at breakfast, in a little room opening out of the magnificent double drawing-room of the house he occupied—a house which, in point of size and appointments, seemed out of all proportion to his position in life—that of a poor Italian refugee.

The breakfast-room was peculiar. It was lit by a day-light, so that the morning sunshine poured in a stream down into the room, and the floor, covered with a Turkey rug, had a strange tendency to creak and vibrate under a heavy tread, as if hollow and insecure. On the white walls hung photographs, both portraits and landscapes of the count's own taking, and his love of science also showed itself in certain objects on the mantelpiece and sideboard, such as a mounted microscope, a Leyden jar, a half-open chest of chemicals, a small hydrometer for ascertaining the density of fluids, a heap of fossils and crystals of rare value, and various other objects familiar in the laboratory of the chemist.

But none of these objects engaged the count's attention as he sat in the full blaze of a great fire, wrapped in a dressing-gown, and with the sun-light pouring upon his head, and making his hair shine and glisten with unwonted lustre. While trying to realize, by the aid of sun and fire, some approach to the warmth of his native climate, his seal's eyes were devouring with avidity the columns of a foreign newspaper.

"They do not spare one," he muttered, with a scowl which doubled the wrinkles on his shelving forehead. "By Jove! It's pleasant to read one's own description in these flattering terms—'This bad citizen and worse man is now living in exile in England—that scoundrel of the refuse of Europe—in the society of congenial expatriated ruffians. Under an assumed name, he maintains the fiction of scientific pursuits,

as a mask for political intrigue; and derives the means of life and of carrying on his regicidal and patricidal career, from that old resource of men of his stamp—the gaming-table.' The man who wrote that," the count continued, throwing down the newspaper in disgust, "may thank his stars that the British Channel flows between us."

Bilious with anger, the count sat for a time gnawing thin lips: then he turned from the fire and proceeded to breakfast.

It was a light repast, more Italian than English in character. There was an omelet of a saffron colour, and swimming in oil; a dish of roast pears and a dish of poached eggs, served on sponge-cake with preserves. Tea was the beverage; but not made in the English fashion. The count, like his countrymen generally, had an abhorrence for the black, strong, coarse infusion in which we delight. He poured his boiling water on green tea, and without letting it "stand" more than a few moments poured it out into his cup—an almost colourless liquor, with only the most subtle and delicate flavour of the tea about it.

This repast over, Rosario lit a cigarette of his own making, and having watched a few coils of the smoke as it ascended, exclaimed:

"Now for more torture—now for the morning's letters."

They were pretty numerous; but had been lying in a heap by his side unopened while he breakfasted. It was one of this strange man's rules never to open letters before partaking of a meal. "If they contain good news," he was wont to say, "they are exciting, and excitement destroys appetite; if their contents are unpleasant, worse still—bad news destroys both appetite and digestion."

The letters were, for the most part, of flimsy texture and bore foreign postmarks; but there were a few English, and these first attracted the patriotic Italian's notice. Especially the one from Imrac Garmeson.

"So, so!" he exclaimed. "Our banker writes, does he? And what does our banker say? 'The prodigies of superstition only foreshadow the novelties of science.' True. And the wiles of duplicity and cunning anticipate both. What is this?—he credits that the face of the murderer may be seen in the eyes of the murdered! He wishes me to experimentalize. 'The cause of science demands it, and an issue more important to me than that of life and death urges me to make this request.' Ha! ha! It is so, is it? And pray what has converted our banker to a belief in science?"

He sat biting his lips, and pulling out his fingers till they cracked, and all the time deep in thought.

Presently he looked up, and his left hand played with one of the rat-tails of his moustache, as he said:

"I was not wrong in my surmise. Garmeson suspects the perpetrator of this murder, and hopes some advantage from it. It must be so. That is the only explanation I can offer of the strange scene between him and that mysterious being who brought the forged cheque to the bank. It was a lucky thought of mine to step into the dead-closet and turn the key in the lock. Not one man in twenty would have had the presence of mind to snatch at the key as he stole in, or the sagacity to lock the door when he was in. Yet it saved all! That door being locked, threw them off their guard. They talked freely then, of the two forged cheques, and all the rest of it. And surely there is but one conclusion to come to about the matter. If Garmeson had not a guilty knowledge of the murder, what motive could have been strong enough to induce him to hand over the money for the forged cheque?"

It was natural for the count to come to this conclusion.

He knew of the murder; he knew the result of the interview. One was a possible explanation of the other. And how easy it was for even a cunning man to guess at the inference that the possible explanation was the true one!

He sat a long while with the letter in his hand, thinking over this and biting his lips. All his relations with Garmeson passed in review under his mental vision, and all that he knew or had heard of the banker's career presented itself in vivid colours before him.

And be sure that among the rest he did not forget the startling fact which he had learned in the interview at which he had played the spy, namely, that the banker had contracted a secret marriage with Ada Lomax.

The count had been greatly struck with Ada on the night when he met her at Lady Severn's. He had remarked how her beautiful face lit up as she expressed a hope that he might be able to give some clue to her lost brother. He had also noticed with what authoritative air Garmeson had almost forbidden her from following up her inquiries. At the time, he attributed this to the banker's position in the family, and to the same cause he had set down the specious reasons which he assigned for keeping him at a safe distance. Every time he (the count) had expressed a desire to dance with Ada, his advances

had been repulsed and obstacles thrown in his way.

All this was easy enough to understand now. "These old husbands of young wives," muttered Rosario, tapering out one of his rat tails.

He drew himself up, thrust out his massive chest, and with the disengaged hand tapered out the other tail of his moustache.

"I can understand that," he resumed; "but even with the knowledge of his secret marriage before me, our banker is a riddle. His sudden interest in this murder does not arise from his new relation to the alleged murderer—though some people might object to such a character as a brother-in-law—and if not from that cause, what is the reason of it?"

He abandoned his moustache and worked away at his lips, thinking hard, but nothing came of it.

"What is the reason of it?" he repeated.

In vain.

His ingenuity could not shape the answer.

At length, in sheer disgust, he rung the bell for an attendant, and gave instructions for the packing of his portmanteau, and the portable camera, for photographic purposes, to which the banker's letter had reference. In a very short time all was ready, his brougham was at the door, and Rosario, having enveloped his tightly laced and padded figure in a travelling cloak, lined with furs, was on his way to the Waterloo Station.

At that hour of the day the Strand was crowded. Vehicle pressed on vehicle. Drivers shouted and cursed themselves hoarse. Ranks were formed and broken; but the feverish struggle to get forward only ended in continual dead-lock.

For half-an-hour or so the Count found himself moving forward by jerks; sometimes the brougham would go ten yards, sometimes a hundred, never more, without a sudden pull up.

In the midst of this irritating state of things there was a sudden cry of "Horse down!"

At that time the vehicles were moving with tolerable regularity in double ranks each way, and Rosario observed that the rank beside his was thrown into confusion, while his brougham moved smartly on.

With natural curiosity he looked out. He pressed his face against the glass of the door and saw that a cab in the line parallel with that in which he moved, had stopped, and that a horse lay kicking on the ground under it.

He was still in the act of observing this, when the occupant of the vehicle which had come to grief suddenly thrust his head and shoulders out of the window, to see what was going on. It was a thoughtless act, and the man speedily paid the penalty of his imprudence.

He had not exposed his head an instant, before the lamps of a carriage forward in the line in which the count's vehicle moved, dashed against it. The man dropped across the cab door as if felled by an axe.

Count Rosario saw this and heard the cry of consternation which followed. And at that moment an exclamation rose to his lips also.

"The very man!" broke from him involuntarily.

In the face which hung bleeding from the cab-window he recognized that of the individual who had held the secret interview with Immac Garmeson, to which he had listened!

It was a strange coincidence; but many such had cheered the life of the Italian, and his presence of mind did not desert him.

One principle governed this man. He tried everything by one test. No matter whom he met or what befell him, the first question always was, "Will he, or will this, be useful to me?" So now, in an instant, in a flash of thought he asked himself, "Can I turn this accident to my advantage?"

He decided that he could.

And having decided this, he tugged at the check-string, and sprang from the brougham.

A crowd had already assembled, but he dashed forward, thrust the idlers right and left, and so at once commanded attention.

"Stand aside!" he cried, "all of you. I know this gentleman. He's a friend of mine. The blow has stunned him—that's all. Who'll help to move him into my carriage?"

But the cabman whose horse had by this time stumbled to its feet, protested against having his fare removed, and Rosario found himself compelled to give his card and settle the fellow's demands before he could carry out his benevolent intentions.

Then the unconscious man, from whose brow a stream of blood was trickling, was placed in the other vehicle.

"Take the luggage too, sir?" the cabman asked.

"By all means," said the count. "Is there much of it?"

"Only a portmanteau and hat-box."

These articles were forthwith dragged to light, and placed on the box of the vehicle in which their owner was lying still unconscious. In their transit, Rosario's

quick eyes did not fail to read the label on them, it was inscribed, "Captain Harcourt, Folkestone."

"Oh, oh! this is our manœuvre, is it?" mused the count; "we have saved the golden eggs, and are about to depart with them to a more congenial shore. Folkestone—Boulogne—Paris"—he told the names off on his fingers. "That was our route, I'll bet a thousand. Suppose we alter it a little. Suppose we say Strand—Holborn—Gray's Inn Lane—Poulter's Arms?"

He tapped at the window and gave the coachman the necessary instructions.

Then he rubbed his hands with intense satisfaction.

"Capital!" he exclaimed, "nothing could have been more fortunate. Our banker has dangerous secrets. Dangerous secrets, well worked, are as valuable as freeholds, consols, railway debentures or mining shares. Our banker, having taken advantage of my youth and inexperience, is more than disposed to give me the go by. But, no, my dear Immac. No, no, my very dear Garmeson. Not after I have learned so much, and certainly not now that I can put your charming accomplice under lock and key, and keep him there until he makes a full confession, or till I can terrify you into the false step of taking me into your confidence."

It was the count's habit to soliloquize thus, as if addressing some person present. But while doing so, his eyes were fixed intently on the face of the man who reclined insensible on the back seat of the brougham. The bold, well-defined features struck him as familiar; yet he decided that he had never seen them before that evening when the man entered the banker's parlour.

The idea of familiarity therefore was a delusion. But in order to satisfy himself on this point it was necessary for him to scrutinise the man's face closely, and in doing so, he noticed several peculiarities which remained stoutly impressed on his memory.

"It is a handsome face, and the face of a scoundrel in one," was the count's verdict after this minute examination. "But, by Jove, he is reviving!" he added, in some alarm.

It was true; the eyelids were beginning to quiver. Rosario looked up eagerly.

To his joy, he found that they were approaching the Poulter's Arms, and that establishment, which was within a few yards of the Rents, was his present destination. He resolved to leave the stranger—in whom he had taken this sudden interest—there until he had recovered, and in order that his recovery might not be inconveniently sudden or violent, he intended to place him under the care of his trusty agent, the man Cooter!

As it happened, the very man was lounging at the door of the house, in his shirt-sleeves and unlaced boots, smoking a short pipe. He looked up as the brougham stopped, and recognizing the count, without appearing to do so, dashed his pipe on the pavement, and hastened to receive his commands.

A few words explained what had happened and what was wanted. Rosario kept up the fiction that it was his friend who had met with an accident, and for whom he needed shelter; and while he said this, his eyes expressed much more, which it was not difficult for Cooter to understand. The landlord, too, a man of the same stamp, on coming to the door, seemed equally intelligent, but nervously anxious to get the stranger under his roof without observation.

"Come, then," said the count, "remove him at once."

He sprang from the brougham as he spoke, and Cooter approached it and looked in.

At the first glance he uttered an exclamation, and retreated a step or two.

"What is it?" asked Rosario, in alarm.

"Nothing—nothing."

That this was not the cause of his agitation the count saw clearly enough; but he chose to accept the explanation, at least for the present.

"They are known to each other," he mused, as he watched the removal of the unconscious form from the carriage into the house. "They have had dealings together. The scoundrels! That being so, can I trust Cooter? I must. I have no alternative. And if he plays me false—"

His eyes flashed, and he snapped his teeth together with an unpleasantly suggestive sound.

But as Cooter came out of the house again to take the stranger's portmanteau and hat-box, for which his fingers had itched from the first, Rosario forced an oily smile into his sinister face, and said:

"You will take charge of this poor fellow. He will not leave for a day or two. You understand? He will not recover until you see or hear from me, and, till then, do not leave him, night or day. You are sure you understand?"

The fellow nodded, and then Rosario re-entered his brougham, and set off for the Waterloo Station once more, the oily smile dying out of his face as he went.

CHAPTER XXIX.

MADGE COOTER'S WEAKNESS.

Yes, it is best that we should part,
Best, since I cannot trust my heart,
And dare not hear its voice:
For what am I that he should care
Whether I perish in despair,
Or in his love rejoice?

Bryant.

TRUE to the trust which his master had reposed in him, Frank did his duty by the dead as he had done by the living. During the interval between the inquest and the time fixed for the funeral, the man kept watch over all that remained of the gay, sprightly, handsome Leonard Havering, and mourned for him as for a brother.

During that time the quiet and repose of the chamber of death was often disturbed.

The Haverings, a great Leicestershire family, were naturally horrified at the tragedy which had deprived them at a blow of the pride and flower of the family, the heir to vast estates, the object of boundless care, devotion, and idolatry.

It had been against the wish of his father, a decrepit old man, that Leonard, the son of his advanced life, had entered the army, since he was exposed to the danger as well as the glory of meeting a premature death. To have lost him on the field of battle would have been a calamity hard to bear, but to lose him thus, by the hand of an assassin, was a calamity too horrible to be easily realised.

The rumour went that from the moment at which the news reached him, the poor old father had been a raving maniac, who had wandered through his ancestral halls, shrieking day and night for his boy, his motherless darling, the pride and sunshine of his life.

So the father came not near his dead son.

But, daily some one or other of the family arrived and sought out Frank, and gained admission to the dead, with varying results. Some maintained their frigid dignity and icy self-composure from first to last. Others broke down utterly—forgot their titles, their wealth, their high station, everything, and sobbed and prostrated themselves in their grief like common mortals.

In whatever other respects they differed, however, they all agreed in this—they all regarded Arthur Lomax as beyond all doubt and question, guilty of their relative's death. In one other sense, too, there was a strong similarity among them. While they knew of Arthur as a common soldier only, no epithet was too harsh to be applied to him. "Murderous wretch!" was a mild form of denunciation. But when they learned that he was the nephew of Lord Severn, and heir to the Severn property, they, without an exception, changed their tone, and characterized him as "That unfortunate youth!"

None of these people stayed long. One or two contrived to spare time and subdue grief sufficiently to dine with the archbishop at his palace. But, for the most part, they came, stared, felt wretched, and went. Some had pressing business in town, where a new ballet was creating a great sensation just then. Others had left friends at places where they had been shooting, or had quitted country houses where they were staying as guests, and their return was imperative.

Thus it happened that the care of his dead master continued to devolve on Frank, and many and many a solemn hour he spent alone in the ante-room of the chamber of death.

During many hours he had a companion—a strange one in some respects, for it was no other than Madge Cooter, who still lingered in the neighbourhood, which, for some reason of her own, appeared to have a fascination for her. From the night she had shown him the witch's crystal, Frank had taken a liking to Madge. She was rough as rough could be. Wild as a colt, and almost as ignorant. Her bringing up had developed qualities rarely found in women. They, as a rule, are accustomed to be tenderly cared for and watched. She was used to neglect, and to protecting herself. An expression she often used explained her exactly:

"I'm forced to get by my hands, and keep by my fists."

That might be called her motto.

Frank, who was a smart, handy, clean-made young fellow, whom the women were accustomed to set their caps at, was struck with this originality. Perhaps Madge's big black eyes, that flamed up at the slightest provocation, might have had something to do with it. Moreover, that tangled mass of rusty-black hair fell over well-rounded shoulders, and Madge had a trim waist for all that she was guiltless of stays, and she carried herself well, and had a light elastic step, in spite of her clumsy boots, and these are points which a young man is not apt to overlook.

At all events, Madge was always welcome to the solitary watcher in the ante-room of the death-chamber.

One night she presented herself in a flurried and excited state, and with her eyelids red from weeping. "Good bye," she said, holding out her brown hand, "You've been a good chap to me. Good bye." "Going, Madge?" Frank asked, in surprise. "Yes. I'm off to-night. I've stayed too long already."

"No! Have you though? I thought Garmeson was making it worth your while. He wanted you to stay till he had tested the revelations of that crystal globe of yours by photography. The results, he says, will be more accurate."

"And why does he say so?" asked Madge, bluntly.

"Why?" "Yes. What is it to him? Why did he come to father me over about my evidence, and try to wheedle me into letting out what I've never let out even to you. He's a chap I don't like, and won't trust, and the sooner I'm out of this the better."

"That's your reason for going, then?" Frank asked. "No," she answered, petulantly, and burst into tears. It was such an unusual mood for her that Frank looked on in amazement.

"I'm getting daft, I think," the girl resumed, after a pause; "or if 'tain't that I don't know what it is. But ever since we've talked together, I aint been myself. I never had nobody that was civil and gentle with me before, and I don't know what to make of it. I've always had to get with my hands and hold with my fist; it's always been an oath and a blow with me, and kindness is turning my brain, I think."

She had spoken through her tears, and now stopped, and dabbed her eyes with a corner of the old blue apron she wore.

Frank hardly knew what to answer; but his right arm found its way round the girl's slim waist, and she did not object, but went on again.

"What cuts me up worst of all," she said, "is that you should come to think worse of me than I am, and yet I don't see how any words can help you doing it. Still, I should feel happier like, if I knew that you could never turn round and say, 'She was sly and artful, and took advantage of me,' and prisms, knowing what I am, you might make allowances, in case you should hear—in case things come out that look black against me."

"I shall always think the best of you," Frank gallantly answered.

But Madge was not satisfied of that.

"You may, or you may not," she returned. The Lord knows. Any way, it shan't be said that you nourished a snake in the grass, or was kind to a poor girl, unknowing what she was, or who she had about her. A few words, and it's all told. Years ago, when I was a baby in arms, my father was honest, upright, straightforward, and as decent a working man as here and there one. They called him Lucky Cooter then, and said he'd die rich. He said he'd rather die honest, and he meant it. I don't believe as there was more harm in his whole body than there is in my little finger. Oh, yes, he meant it then, sure enough, but it wasn't to be."

"Wasn't to be?" "No. We lived in the country then. It was in the coaching times, and he was yardman at a house where the coaches put up. One morning there was a great outcry. Some one had left money—a matter of a hundred pounds in notes—in the pocket of the overnight coach. It was gone. The coach had been left under father's care. They said he took the money. It was a lie; he never had it. But it ruined him. He was convicted, transported, and came back seven years after, a broken-down, luckless, desperate man."

"Poor wretch!" cried Frank. "While he was away what d'ye think happened to those he left behind? To my mother?—to me? Was he looked after or cared for by them that made mother a widow and me an orphan? No. High and low turned their backs upon us. What father had done was visited upon us; and how it was I don't. As for me, I was young and tough. I used my wits and my fingers. I grew so hardened, nothing touched me; so cunning and so brazen, that I picked up a living where scores of others died of sheer want. When father came home, he got about him many strange men, that looked at me and talked to him of me in a way I didn't understand. But for all that they frightened me; and as father was harsh and brutal to me, I gave him the slip and run away. Then I fell in with tramps, and got hold of their ways; then went to help a woman that worked a barge; and that, and travelled with a basket-van; and so, in twenty different ways, picked up a living, hard but pleasant; getting with my hand, keeping with my feet. Three years passed in this way, when by chance I heard news of home. I heard that mother, always an ailing, delicate woman, was down with a paralytic stroke. It wasn't that I'd much sense as to duty, but mother was always good to me, and in three days I was back in London, and had found out where she

was. I went there, and I ain't likely to forget my welcome home in a hurry."

"It was warm?" Frank asked.

"Warm! It was hot!" the girl answered, with a sad smile. "I had hardly set my foot within his room, when my father felled me with a blow."

"The brute!" ejaculated the young man.

"I fell back into the street, my head in the gutter, and he would have bolted the door on me, only the neighbours interfered. They insisted on his having me in, and at last, I was carried and laid by mother's side. When I came to, I knew what I had to expect; father was brutal; mother was in mortal fear of him, and in her helplessness could only cry. But I'd expected this, and battled it all out, and in time, father and I understood one another after a fashion. I made his home comfortable, and he left me to do as I liked. That state of things remains."

"And you are still at home?"

"Yes: if I can call it home."

Frank reflected for a moment.

"But that is in London?" he asked; "how comes it you are here?"

Madge looked at him with sudden distress.

"That's a secret," she said. "But as I've told you all so far, it's as well that you should know the rest. Among others that father's mixed up with, more to his harm than good, there's an Italian, the Count—"

"—I forget his name—and it's not many weeks ago that he came to our house to talk over what he called business. As if a man in his station could have any righteous dealings with people in ours! They thought they were alone; but I was in the house and heard all that passed. It concerned a lad, who the count said, they wanted to get out of the way for a while, say a month or so. He suggested one way, father another, and at last it came to this, that the count was to stufly the boy, and father was to get a recruiting sergeant, a chap he'd known when he was away, to take him to the depot and swear that he had 'list'ed."

"Why that must have been Arthur Lomax?" said Frank.

"It was. Well, the thing was done. The lad was brought down here, and soon after father received a letter asking him to come down and see the sergeant on special business. I suspected worse doings, and I resolved to follow. Father trumped it and so did I. He was here on the night of the murder, and now you'll understand why I came to you that night I brought the witch's glass, and why I thanked heaven for what it showed me. Till I saw that I didn't know, I feared, I trembled to think that father might have been guilty of—of murder."

She shuddered at the idea.

"But since your mind's at ease on that point," said Frank, "why go?"

"Because I'm getting restless and uneasy. A presentiment of something wrong has come over me. Yes, I must get back; besides, I've stayed too long."

"Too long?" His arm was still round her waist, and he looked tenderly down into her face as he spoke.

"Yes, yes," she said, bursting into a fresh paroxysm of tears, "but it's no matter. Don't ask me anything. I have, and that's enough. I couldn't go till I'd told you all this, because, if anything happened, I thought—I thought you'd say father and me were all one. And now you know it, and I know you'll keep my confidence, and sometimes, when you're going to blame me, you may think how hard my life has been, and may—may—pity me. Good-bye."

Fairly overcome, she held out her hand. Frank squeezed it fervently.

"I do pity you, Madge," he exclaimed; "and what is more, I admire you."

She looked at him for a moment doubtfully, then drew her hand away.

"No, no," she said, "that's what they all say. They all begin with that—"

"But I mean it, Madge, and some day—"

"Some day!" she cried, hastily. "Yes, yes, some day. But now—good-bye!"

She was gone almost before the words were uttered. As she descended the stairs two persons passed her. In one she recognized Imac Garmeson, and in the other who hugg on his arm, the Italian of whom she had just spoken, Count Rosario.

They were conversing, and as she stole down, this sentence caught her ear.

"The fact of the likeness in the eye of the dead is curious," the count said; "but is no value as evidence. It cannot be relied on, and for this reason: the last face on which the dying man looked might not be that of his murderer; it might even be that of a friend coming to his assistance."

As these words reached Madge Cooter's ear, they seemed to strike a chill to her very heart.

"Merciful powers!" she ejaculated, "after all then, father may be the guilty man!"

(To be continued.)

A CLOUD OF LOCUSTS.—In the last advices from Senegal, that country is reported as infested by locusts in numbers larger than ever, and a fact is mentioned which enables readers at a distance to judge of the prodigious swarms. A French steamer, with the governor on board, was lying in the river, when a swarm of locusts passed, flying inland, in such inconceivable numbers as completely to hide the shore from the company in the vessel. It was, in fact, a dense cloud of locusts forty-five miles long, which occupied from sunrise to sunset in passing. As an illustration of the proverb concerning an ill-wind, we read further, that while this invasion of locusts filled the black farmers with despair, the moors who are not agriculturalists, were in high spirits, as they kill and preserve large quantities of the insects for food.

THE HISTORY OF THE POET LAUREATESHIP.

THE Greeks were the first to crown with laurel poet successful in musical contests, and from them the practice was adopted by the Romans. The appellation Laureate seems to have been derived through the Italian, from the Latin (*Laureus*, a bay), in allusion to this ancient usage, which was revived in the twelfth century. Custom, rather than vanity, has perpetuated the office at the English court.

Petrarch, "the Italian songster of Laura and of Love," received the crown at the Capitol, in Rome, on the 8th of April, 1341; from his early youth the laurel was endeared to him by a verbal resemblance with the name of his mistress. The ceremony of his coronation is described by Gibbon:

"Twelve patrician youths were arrayed in scarlet; six representatives of the most illustrious families in green robes, with garlands of flowers, accompanied the procession; in the midst of the princes and nobles, the senator, Count of Arguillara, a kinsman of the Colonna, assumed the throne; and, at the voice of the Herald, Petrarch arose! After discoursing on a text of Virgil, and thrice repeating his vows for the prosperity of Rome, he knelt before the throne, and received from the senator a laurel crown, with a more precious declaration, 'This is the reward of merit.' The people shouted, 'Long life to the Capitol and the Poet.' A sonnet in praise of Rome was accepted as the effusion of gratitude and genius; and, after the procession had visited the Vatican, the profane wreath was suspended before the shrine of St. Peter," &c.

Tasso, the author of one of the greatest epics ever written, was told by that just and learned Pope, Clement the Eighth, that he was about to award him the laurel crown, "that it might be as much honoured by him as in former times it had served to honour others," but, unfortunately, he died as it was about being conferred upon him, in 1595.

In several European countries, the sovereign has assumed the privilege of appointing a court poet, with various titles. In Germany there were laureates at a very remote period. The French, though they have had royal poets, never had laureates; and, although the title has existed in Spain, but little is known of those who bore it. Allusion to the office we find in "Don Quixote."

In England, Baston and Guillemus appear to have acted, respectively, in the capacity of royal poets to Richard I. (A.D. 1189) and to Edward I. Warton, in his "History of Poetry," shows that the Poet-Laureate is undoubtedly the same officer who, in the reign of Henry III., was styled the King's Versifier, and to whom one hundred shillings were paid as his annual stipend. There is a tradition that Edward III., emulating the crowning of Petrarch, conferred the office on Chaucer, and that in the year 1389 Richard II. originated the annual allowance of wine.

The succession of royal poets—or Poets-Laureates—from the time of the "Father of English Poetry," has been as follows, with the dates of their accession to office:—Geoffrey Chaucer, A.D. 1373; Henry Scogan, 1400; John Kay, 1461; Andrew Barnard, 1485; John Skelton, 1510; Edmund Spenser, 1590; Samuel Daniel, 1599; Ben Jonson, 1615; Sir W. Davenant, Kt., 1638; John Dryden, 1670; Thomas Shadwell, 1689; Nahum Tate, 1693; Nicholas Rowe, 1714; Lawrence Eusden, 1719; Colley Cibber, 1730; William Whitehead, 1758; Thomas Warton, 1785; Henry J. Fye, 1790; Robert Southey, 1813; William Wordsworth, 1842; Alfred Tennyson, 1850.

THE LATE DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND.—On the large family property in the north the death of the duke will be much felt by his tenantry and labouring population. The duke's possessions in Northumberland comprised 3,000 acres of woodlands, 116,200 acres of hill pasture, grass lands, &c., 38,900 acres of tillage occupation, and 4,700 waste, sea-shore, rock, &c., in all 162,800 acres. During his occupancy, his grace, down to the 1st of January, 1864, had expended £35,669 in roads and bridges, £308,336 12s. 9d. in

building cottages, &c., and £176,382 4s. in drainage upon his vast estate; upwards of 1,000 cottages have been either built or put into good repair. While improving the homesteads of his farmers and the cottages of his labourers, the deceased nobleman has expended a quarter of a million sterling upon the Prudhoe Tower and other extensive works at Alnwick Castle, and his great scheme of church-extension, just completed before his lamented death, has involved an outlay of £100,000. His grace was very anxious, when he found his health was failing, to complete a large and magnificent scheme that he had long contemplated, for the education of the children of fishermen and seamen on the coast of Northumberland, and it is stated that the endowment of schools in the villages of Whitley, Tynemouth, Percy Main, and at North Shields, was completed shortly before his death. The Duke of Northumberland built the Tyne Sailors' Home, at a cost of upwards of £7,000. He also established lifeboats and lifeboat stations at Hauxley, Tynemouth, Cullercoats, and Newbiggin, and was a munificent supporter of all the local charities.

MARION LEONE.

It was high noon at Lessington. The blazing sun seemed pausing in mid-heaven ere he wheeled his burning chariot down the western sky. Everything was suffocating in the intense heat.

On the trees that studded the lawn the foliage hung limp and nerveless; in the garden the flowers were languid and drooping; the plash of the fountain had grown faint and indistinct, only now and then a few drops fell from the marble shaft.

The droning hum of a bee, lazily winging by, blended with the chirp of a cricket; not a breeze stirred the air, or ruffled the glass-like surface of the lake.

Within the house everything partook of the stagnation without.

It was a grand Elizabethan mansion, with white marble steps running the entire length of the front; the columns of the verandah were also carved marble. The long windows were open to the floor, that all the air possible might enter.

Marion Leone was pacing with a slow, languid step, back and forth through the long, sumptuous parlour—a luxurious room—the carpet of softest velvet, and its rich, trailing pattern of the most intense tropical blossoms, emblematic of the whole house and its strange mistress.

She was beautiful!

You do not often see a really beautiful woman. There are thousands who are handsome, and the number quadrupled who are pretty; but really beautiful women are very rare.

It would be useless to attempt to describe her; as useless for an artist to endeavour to catch the sunlight glinting on a running stream, or for a sculptor to carve the dash of an eye in the cold, impassive marble. She made one think of a royal crimson dahlia, with the fervid sunbeams still burning in its glowing heart, or a bunch of ripe, luscious grapes—such grapes as the sun stains with ruby in the warm light of Italy alone.

She wore a crimson silk robe de chambre, lined with gold-coloured satin, and confined at the waist by a cord of gold. Her hair, black as midnight, lay in a heavy coil at the back of her proud head; and as she paced the long room, the trail of her dress, the poise of her head, and the graceful sweep of her figure reminded one of nothing so much as a gorgeous tiger lily awaying in the breeze.

One might know such ripe, perfect beauty had never matured beneath the pale skies of Britain. She was the only daughter of a rich Cadiz merchant, who, two years before, had purchased the beautiful grounds and mansion at Lessington, and had them fitted up to suit the fastidious taste of his daughter.

Reaching down in front of the mansion was a lawn, thickly planted with tall elms, feathery willows, and other trees, whose outlines were graceful and flowing; there had been a few poplars growing at one side, which Marion had ordered to be cut down.

"The grim, horrid things," she had said; she would never dare go out on the lawn after night if they were allowed to stand; besides, she could never endure anything so straight and angular.

There were wide gravel walks winding through the trees, and a broad carriage-drive, and lilac and syringa bushes gleamed out amid the foliage.

To the left was the garden, a perfect wilderness of flowers, that loaded the air with intoxicating perfume, and in the midst a fountain, where a Hebe, on whose white, cold brow was carved the flowers of eternal freshness and youth, was dropping a shower of delicate blossoms from her marble fingers; and dripping over them the misty water fell into the basin beneath.

At her feet knelt a fairy Cupid, from whose half-bent bow the water was flashing in countless tiny rainbows.

Roses and sunny lilies dipped their heads over the mossy basin.

Everything about the place breathed an odour of luxuriance, of dreamy, bewildering beauty.

"Is not the heat intolerable, Marion? How can you endure to remain within doors when the air is so heavy? Oh, dear, I am nearly suffocating."

The speaker was a dainty little blonde, in a white morning wrapper, lolling on a sofa, and lazily fanning herself.

Marion paused, turned around slowly, with a soft, easy motion, a smile of half-scorn wreathing her lips.

"Oh, fie, Lizzie, you are so afraid of a little heat; an atmosphere that chills me through and through is pronounced very warm, and the first approach to anything like real warmth is intolerable heat! What book were you reading?"

"Jane Eyre."

"Did you find it interesting?"

"Yes—no, not very; it makes me nervous."

"I thought you would not like it—ugh!"—and Marion shuddered—"the descriptions of those icy winter days froze all the blood in my veins, and the pictures were all horrid things, most of them dripping with drizzling, dismal rain. I threw the book away in disgust before I had half finished it. I should think that book would be an antidote to the heat you are complaining of."

She swept through the apartment, took a turn up and down the verandah, came back, and threw herself languidly down on a divan, and rang a little silver bell at her side.

A slight, graceful girl appeared.

"Fan me, Zoe."

The girl took her seat on a low ottoman at her mistress's side, and commenced slowly waving a magnificent wand tipped with Bird of Paradise feathers above the queenly head.

Lizzie went up to her room, and Marion's long lashes swept down on the pearly cheek, the willowy outlines of her form relaxed, and she was sleeping. The Bird of Paradise feathers dropped on the carpet, the small, fair hands of the girl were clasped on her knees, a dreamy, far-away look in her eyes—and perfect hush, born of the fervid heat, rested on the mansion and over the grounds at Lessington.

The clock in the dining-room chimed three before Lizzie came down, attired in the lightest and loveliest blue dress, so cool and refreshing, her hair of amber and gold rippling in waves beneath the most ravishing little net, the mingled odour of heliotrope and violets floating about her, and her white hands still fragrant from her bath. It was as if a white, fleecy cloud had floated up of the hot sky. Marion and her maid were gone—there was no one visible.

Lizzie strolled into the conservatory, where bright-winged birds were flitting through the rare odorous blooms.

A splendid piece of statuary stood at the entrance. She paused for a moment, and gazed at the patient, quiet mouth, the mute sorrow depicted on the sad face—wondered how Marion could tolerate anything so sad and cold as that chiselled marble anywhere near her—moved on through the trailing blossoms, plucked a few camelias, some scarlet cactus flowers, and a handful of rose geranium leaves.

"Marion likes these scarlet blossoms; they will please her," she murmured; and going back to the parlour, she arranged them in an exquisite vase that stood on a rosewood table just opposite a pier-glass.

She glanced at the *petite* figure opposite, and smiled at the fair reflection.

"I am not splendid as Cousin Marion is," she mused—"but the violet may please as well as the royal japonica."

The approach of Colonel Leone with a visitor was announced; and both gentlemen speedily entered.

"Mr. Tracy, my niece, Miss Stanton; Miss Stanton, Mr. Tracy."

Lizzie bowed, smiled bowitchingly, and, crossing the room, sank into a velvet sofa.

Colonel Leone motioned his guest to a seat nearly opposite her, taking one himself near the wide-open door, and making a fan of his Lechorn hat.

"Oh, uncle Leone, I am so glad you have come. It has been so warm, and Marion and I are dying of lassitude," said Lizzie, in her low, musical tones; then, turning to Mr. Tracy: "Cousin Marion is a perfect hothouse flower; she likes the thermometer at ninety degrees in the shade—a temperature that I can hardly endure. Do you reside in the neighbourhood, Mr. Tracy?"

She sent a swift, searching glance over the gentleman as she addressed him.

His exterior certainly was faultless—a high, white forehead, with crisp, brown hair lying lightly against

it; large, melting, blue eyes; a mouth with soft, yielding lines about it; a heavy, glossy beard, which just now he was stroking caressingly with a fair, small hand.

He, in turn, carefully inspected the little cloud of beauty opposite him, as he replied:

"Not permanently. I come down here through the hot months to get away from the heat and glow of the city, to rest a little from the care and perplexity of life. The scenery here is very beautiful, Miss Stanton."

His voice was one of those strangely-musical voices that a woman cannot once hear without wishing the deep, meaning tones repeated—a voice that had a suggestion of sadness running through it.

"Yes, it is very beautiful. The wide sweep of the valley is magnificent, with the lake lying so still on its bosom, as it does this afternoon. But I should like it better were there mountains in the distance. The willow-fringed hills beyond the lake are graceful and beautiful, but they are not grand, like mountains."

"Ah, Miss Leone, I am happy to see you," he said, abruptly, as Marion entered.

He arose and advanced to meet her, as she came in with her languid, floating motion, royal as a young queen. She wore a dress of shining grenadine, purple, threaded with gold, fashioned low in the neck, the sleeves looped up from round polished arms, on one of which coiled an exquisite gold bracelet, in the form of a serpent, whose eyes were two glittering diamonds; and a few scarlet voracious flames in the heavy folds of glossy black hair.

"You are very welcome," she said, extending to the gentleman a delicate, jewelled hand. "I am too indolent to amuse you, but cousin Lizzie will best you at a game of chess, I make no doubt. The air to-day is warm and soft. These glowing days suit me—you know I love everything intensified."

Her voice, rich and deep, harmonized with her dress, the day, with everything around her, luxury-loving being that she was.

A servant brought in a lunch on a chased silver waiter; white foamy cream, with cake and ruddy strawberries.

Marion declined the cream, but took a portion of the fruit with a dainty slice of cake, and seated herself at her father's side. He was a fine-looking man, little beyond the prime of life, yet with a face that bore traces of intense suffering. He was very unlike his daughter; she had evidently inherited her dark, sumptuous beauty from her mother.

A lively conversation ensued, notwithstanding the heavy atmosphere. Lizzie was gay as only pure, light-hearted girls can be; Colonel Leone, gentle Mr. Tracy irresistible, Marion, as usual, languid, queenly, a royal dahlia, with the impassioned sunbeams sleeping in its heart.

The midsummer day drew to a close, and the western sky was ablaze with its parting beams, when the party strolled out on the lawn, through the soft golden air of sunset, the air heavy with the breath of countless flowers.

Down the gravel walks, under the acacias, past the elms, they strayed, Colonel Leone and his niece in one direction, Marion and Mr. Tracy in the opposite. The last golden arrow shot by them into the eastern upland; the bees, laden with sweets they had ravished from honeysuckle and clover, hummed by; the faintest breeze had arisen, and was fanning the leaves, whispering among them caressingly, and stirring the waves of perfume that loaded the air. They wandered on down to the hedge of arbor-vitæ that bordered the lawn, passed through the bronze gateway, following the path that led to the lake, down on the headland that jutted out into the water. Great creamy lilies, with hearts of intoxicating odour, lay trembling on the blue waves; the willows bent low their feathery heads, and kissed the quivering water.

On the far eastern hill the moon was rising, and the soft, dreamy waves of light were swelling in the broad valley, and breaking up on the far-off hills, wave after wave of burnished silver. There came to them as they sat on the projecting headland the silvery clime of a far-away village bell—the low, caressing whisper of the night wind in the leaves overhead; the little waves of the lake stroking the white sand. Mr. Tracy broke the silence:

"Marion, life is a strange mystery. I cannot fathom the likes and dislikes that come unbidden. Can we hinder the current of our feelings? If a bouquet of fragrant flowers is laid before us, can we help inhaling their perfume? When we are dying of thirst, can we put away the cup of cooling water? It is a law of our natures. God made us so. I love you, Marion Leone. I cannot help it; as well might you bid the flower refuse to open its petals in the light of the noontide sun. Will you be my wife, my peerless, queenly Marion?"

She bent upon him a searching glance as though she would read his inmost soul. He did not flinch, glance met glance, and the strange magnetism of love

held her. She laid both her fair, beautiful hands in his, and with the intense feeling in her voice that characterized her nature, she said:

"Walter Tracy, I am yours, in joy and sorrow, in life and death. I know that you love me. I am satisfied; but what can your tame nature know of such love as mine—love that shall make your life a Paradise, if you are true—a barren, lifeless desert should you dare deceive me."

For answer to that ominous doubt, he leaned over and pressed a kiss on her burning lips, trembling as their fire penetrated to his deepest soul; then he drew her proud, beautiful head to his shoulder, and in that thrilling moment no presage of evil mingled with the full measure of love's bewildering sweetness. From the silver moonlight flooding lake and lawn they turned and entered the shadows of the shrubbery, walking slowly homeward in a blissful dream.

Thenceforth Marion was more dazzlingly beautiful than ever. All the fervour of her impassioned soul, suddenly awakened from the depths where it had been gathering strength through all the years of her life, shone from her luminous eyes, gloved in her radiant face.

Mr. Tracy came every day. It sometimes seemed as if the tropic sweetness of the love she gave him was too much for his weaker nature.

He was a man of the world, accustomed to the society of beautiful women, never able to resist a pair of magnificent eyes while under the fire of their electric glances; the brief intoxication of the heart that drew him to Marion, was an ill substitute for the intense fire up to him, condensing the spirit and aroma of a lifetime.

Lizzie Stanton still remained a guest at Lessington. She was like some sweet singing bird flitting through the elegant rooms.

At first Mr. Tracy hardly noticed her in the presence of Marion, then after awhile, when she bounded out on the verandah where they were sitting, laughing and chatting in her gay, piquant way, his eyes would wander from the beautiful being at his side, with a strange light in them she could not define. Or when he and Marion were walking in the garden, he would suddenly start and turn pale, as her gold-sprinkled head flashed out from behind a cluster of roses, or the white statues at the fountain, and her dainty fingers picked them sportively with handfuls of flowers.

They were sitting on the steps of the verandah one evening, about five weeks after the time we first introduced them. The western sky was aflame with crimson and gold, the air full fraught with odorous sweets, the wind just rippling the pleasant waters of the lake, the plash of the fountain low and murmuring, the tiny rainbows flashing from the bow of Cupid in the golden light.

Marion looked every inch the peerless queen of beauty that she was. Her hair was sparkling with costly gems; the soft, rich folds of her dress, black like over crimson silk, falling gracefully about her perfect form; the antique gold serpent, with its glittering diamond eyes, coiled on her pearly arm.

Lizzie Stanton came floating up the walk in the lightest of white organdies, a spray of sweetpeas, laden with its pink and white aromatic blossoms, trailing over her shoulder, her hat swinging by the string in one fair, white hand.

"Oh, Marion! Mr. Tracy," she exclaimed, "do turn your eyes from each other and look at that sunset, quick, before it is hid behind the hill! Was ever anything so glorious? Such gorgeous drapings of amber and gold; if I were only a bird how soon I would have my wings in that sea of splendour!"

And she sat down, more dreamy and thoughtful than she had been a long while, throwing the sweetpeas blossoms on the steps, and fanning herself with her hat. They cast a look full of admiration at the dainty little form, then at the piles of amber and gold-tinged clouds.

"They are indeed beautiful!" he said, in one of his most musical tones; "but one need not enter the dominions of cloud-land to gaze on an object of radiant beauty. I was just thinking as you came up through the wilderness of sweets, how like a soft, fleecy cloud you were, floating on the sunlit sky."

"You are profuse in your compliments, Mr. Tracy," she said, and with sudden hauteur she swept past them up the steps, her cheeks scarlet with indignant blushes.

Marion had been intently watching this little tableau; she had noticed the look on her lover's face, the admiration, more than admiration, that flashed from his eyes as he addressed Lizzie. For the first time in all their intercourse had the least doubt of his entire devotion, for a moment, entered her mind. But now it came to her instinctively, powerfully. Her face was as white as the marble on which she sat; and a light, fierce, terrible as the concentrated fire of a volcano, leaped into her eyes.

"You seem greatly to admire my fair cousin; if there is anything in the language of the eyes, I should say even more than admire, Walter Tracy!"

Her voice was cold and hard, so unlike its usual melting music.

"Why, Marion, my beautiful Marion, you are not jealous? Where is your trust, your confidence?"

He moved to her, and took both her soft, jewelled hands in his.

He shivered as he touched them; they were cold as ice.

"You are not well, darling," he continued; "we must go in; the evening air is growing chill and damp."

A wild, delicious thrill passed over her as his hand rested on hers, her cheek flushed, and for a moment she was calmed and reassured.

Then the fierce light shot up to her eyes again as she said:

"Walter, tell me, as you value your peace, do you love me more than any other being that lives? Have you given me all the love it is possible for you to bestow on woman. Is there another being living whom you could love more than me?"

She was trembling, her voice was full of painful intensity, as though his answer was to seal her death warrant.

He drew her close to him, and bent his head till his cheek pressed her soft, black hair.

"Marion, my beautiful love, why will you doubt me? Have I not told you repeatedly that I love you deeply, fervently?"

She snatched away her hands, and sprang to her feet, her eyes blazing.

"But you have not answered me. Have you dared to deceive me? I told you when I pledged my vows of love I would make your life a Paradise if you were true; but did you deceive me, you would repent it. Mr. Tracy, good night!"

She bent her proud head coldly, haughtily, and swept past him along the marble floor of the verandah, through the wide, elegant hall, where exquisite statues looked white and ghostly in the deepening twilight, their faces no whiter nor more ghastly than her own, and threw herself on her knees by an open window, leaning far out into the night, as if she were suffocating.

A long while she knelt there, taking no note of time.

Suddenly the sound of voices in the garden struck upon her ear.

The moon had risen—just such a full glorious moon as had looked on her betrothal, and her intent gaze caught the flutter of a white dress in the pale light, and a dark figure near it.

Following an impulse that at any other time she would have scorned to heed, she sprang upward with the rapidity of lightning, flew down the stairs, across the hall, through the wide breakfast-room, out at a side-door opening into the garden, down the gravel walk, never slackening her wild flight until she paused opposite the white dress and dark figure; then, with hands clasped tightly, parted lips, and breathing hard and quick, she bent eagerly forward to listen, only separated from them by a clump of altheas.

"Then you will not love me a bit, little sprite!—sweet syren! after you have won me away from allegiance to my queen. Oh, Lizzie! I never loved that proud, royal woman, as I love you. She is peerlessly beautiful, but to me you are as much sweeter as this white moonlight is sweeter than the glaring noon-tide. Oh, recall those words, sweet syren!"

He advanced towards her, endeavouring to take her hand; but she sprang away from him with such a recoil as she would from a poisonous serpent, a look of loathing and disgust on her face.

"Walter Tracy, don't dare touch me, with that faithless, perjured hand, you have solemnly pledged to my cousin Marion. Love you? I despise!—I abhor!—I loathe you!—most false of all faithless men! You have won the love of my beautiful cousin; you are her life; she will die if she knows this; and now you cast her from you as a worthless thing, and come to me with your lost honour, your perjured soul. Never breathe such a word to me again; never dare tell me I have won you away from Marion. You know it is your own false nature. Leave me!"

She stamped her tiny foot on the gravel, her voice full of burning contempt and withering scorn. He turned without a word, and passed out through the gate, muttering:

"I didn't think she had so much spirit."

Marion sank down amid the shrubbery, faint, almost dying, as she heard his steps receding. All the agony of an entire lifetime was crowded into a few moments. Then she arose and languidly retraced her steps to her room, and there paced back and forth, her jewelled hands clasped convulsively on her bosom, her white lips compressed tightly, her brow contracted, lowering, the fearful livid glow blazing in her eyes, seeming in this feverish, restless walk, most like an unfamed leopardess behind the iron bars of its cage.

The next day Marion was as calm and beautiful as usual; there was no outward evidence of the storm

that had swept over her, except that she was very pale.

Lizzie seemed sad, fitful, a terrible foreboding she could not shake off lying heavy upon her heart. Every now and then her eyes would fill with unbidden tears, and she blamed herself again and again that she had been the unconscious cause of her cousin's misery.

The reapers were driving home their last load of sheaves, the last golden arrow from the setting sun was darting into the upland, as Mr. Tracy drove up through the trees in his splendid "turn-out," throwing the reins to Jim, who stood grinning by the gate. He ran lightly up the steps, as fascinating and faultless from exquisite hat to polished boots as usual. Marion met him quietly, with no visible emotion, to tell of the volcano burning within. They talked pleasantly for awhile; then she said:

"Walter, would you not like to go down to the lake? It is looking so calm and beautiful to-night; how sweetly one could sleep beneath the white lilies!"

"What an idea, *ma belle*! But indeed I would like to go; it is always lovely there."

He shivered;—what made him?

They went out through the garden, along the foot-path, under the sycamores, down on the headland, where the bending willows drooped over the quivering water; where four weeks before they had pledged their sacred truth-plight.

The soft moonlight again lay white as a shroud on the bosom of the valley; the waves of the lake beat upon the white sand with a low gurgle, that was like the last breath of one dying; the night wind sobbed and moaned in the leaves overhead.

"Walter, do you know it is just four weeks to-night since I promised to be your wife?" she said, in tones so freezing and deathly, that he started in affright. "In these four weeks I have lived all the joy, all the bliss of a common life time, feeling that you loved me. I have lived as much agony since last night, knowing that you are false!—false!" she almost shrieked. Then more calmly: "I do not care to live longer—and you will not want to live, when your queen is gone."

She laughed a bitter, mocking laugh, her face white and rigid, and a terrible maniac-look in her eyes.

There was the glitter of a tiny point in the moonlight, an agonized moan from her victim, a low, straggling gurgle—then a splash! The lake opened its liquid arms to receive the beautiful wreck, then they enfolded it closely in their embrace; and the white moonbeams lay silently above the still water—and on the cold, ghastly face upon the shore.

P. H. C.

INDIAN BRASS GUN TROPHY.—In the war in India in the year 1818, when the whole Mahratta Empire was annexed to the British Crown, there came into our possession, a stupendous brass gun, said to have been cast in the reign of the Emperor Aurangzib, and the Indian Authorities at the time recommended it to be sent as a trophy to England, but the "Court of Directors" objected to such an expense. Since those days there have been wonderful improvements in engineering science and road-making, and the removal of this huge piece of ordnance would now be not only less troublesome, but also much less expensive; and, besides, Her Most Gracious Majesty Victoria is now the Queen of the East, and on the above circumstance being brought to her notice, the before-mentioned extraordinary gun may, we hope, be ordered to be sent to England. It now lies amid the ruins of the once celebrated city of Bujapoor. If our friends on the opposite side of the Channel had such a trophy on the Eastern side of the globe, how soon they would have it at Paris, alongside of the Egyptian obelisk there.

THE GARRICK CLUB.—On the part of the government body, the committee have just blackballed a gentleman nominated for membership by Mr. Charles Dickens, and seconded by Mr. Wilkie Collins. Two such names, in most English societies would have borne some weight; here they have simply sufficed to procure the blackballing of their nominees. The individual on whom the committee have chosen in utter wantonness to affix the stigma of ostracism is of unexceptionable and unimpeachable character, admirable and blameless in every relation of life. He was a well-known, highly-respected, wholly-inoffensive English gentleman, an accomplished scholar, a distinguished writer, and long the esteemed associate of the most illustrious men of letters in England. But the committee have nevertheless chosen to thrust him out, and to tell him in unmistakably rude language that he was not fit to mingle with their high mightinesses. Who is so fit? Clearly not the foremost representatives of literature and art, who have been insulted by the slight thrown upon their friend and

colleagues. We are not surprised, then, to learn that the unhandsome course of procedure pursued at the Garrick is the talk of every other club in London, and that Mr. Charles Dickens and Mr. Wilkie Collins have at once, and indignantly, resigned their positions as members. They have done well so to withdraw, and it would be better still if the few authors and artists of position who yet remain were to follow their example.

CHLOROFORM AT THE HOSPITALS.—The subject of the administration of chloroform is one of such great moment that we wonder every hospital in London has not before this availed itself of the assistance of one of the profession who devote themselves specially to this matter. The recently-published report of the Chloroform Committee shows most forcibly the danger that frequently accrues from its administration, and already most of the operating surgeons in London avail themselves of the services of one or other of the special chloroformists. We are glad to find that the authorities of Westminster Hospital, mainly at the instigation of the senior surgeon, Mr. Holt, have determined that Mr. Clover shall administer chloroform to all patients about to be submitted to surgical operations, and that he shall instruct the resident officers so that they may be capable of acting in his absence. Mr. Clover will also, we believe, have the opportunity afforded him of giving lectures upon the administration of chloroform, which will be doubtless well attended by students and the profession generally.

DRINKING.

MAN is the only animal that drinks without being thirsty, swallowing whole quarts of water when Nature does not call for it, with the alleged view of "washing out" the system. When persons are thirsty, that thirst should be fully assuaged with moderately cool water, drank (in summer time or under great bodily heat or fatigue) very leisurely, but not within half an hour of eating a regular meal. Eminent physiologists agree that drinking at meals dilutes the gastric juice, diminishes its solvent power, and retards digestion, especially if what is drunk is cold. Persons in vigorous health, and who work or exercise a great part of every day in the open air, may drink a glass of water, or a single cup of weak coffee or tea, at each meal, and live to a good old age. But it is very certain that sedentary persons and invalids can not go beyond that habitually, with impunity. The wisdom of such consists in drinking nothing at all at the regular meals beyond a swallow or two at a time of some hot drink of a mild and nutritious character. Feeble persons will be benefited by hot drinks, because they warm up the body, excite the circulation, and thus promote digestion, if taken while eating, and not exceeding a cupful.

Cold water ought never to be drunk within half an hour of eating; for the colder it is, the more instantly does it arrest digestion, not only by diluting the gastric juice, but by reducing its temperature, which is near one hundred degrees. Ice-water is something over thirty-two degrees, and, when swallowed, mixes with the gastric juice, and lowers its temperature, not to be elevated until heat enough has been withdrawn from the general system; and that draft must be made until the hundred degrees of warmth are attained: but some persons have so little vitality, that the body exhausts itself in its instinctive efforts to help the stomach, from which its life and strength come; and the person rises from the table with a cold chill running down the back or over the whole body. Sometimes these drafts upon the body for warmth to the stomach are so sudden and great that they cannot be met, and instantaneous death is the result.

Many a person has dropped dead at the pump or at the spring; such a result is more certain if, in addition to the person being very warm at the time of drinking, there is also great bodily fatigue. A French general recently fell dead from drinking cold water on reaching the top of a mountain, over-heated and exhausted in the effort of bringing up his battalions with promptitude.

Under all circumstances of heat or fatigue, the glass of water should be grasped in the hand, held half a minute, then, taking not over two swallows, rest a quarter of a minute; then two swallows more, and so on, until the thirst is nearly assuaged. It will seldom happen that a person is inclined to take over half a dozen swallows thus.

No case is remembered, in the practice of a quarter of a century, where malt liquors, wines, brandies, or any alcoholic drinks whatever, have ever had a permanent good effect in improving the digestion. Apparent advantages sometimes result, but they are transient or deceptive.

If there is no appetite, it is because Nature has provided no gastric juice; and that is the product of Nature, not of alcohol. If there is appetite, but no digestive power, liquor no more supplies that power

than would the lash give strength to an exhausted donkey. If torture does arouse the sinking beast, it is only that it shall fall a little later into a still greater exhaustion, from which there is no recovery; so with the use of liquor and tobacco as whetters of the appetite, when at length the desire for the accustomed stimulus ceases, and the man "sickens;" there is no longer a relish for the dram and the chew, and life fades apace, either in a stupor from which there is no awaking, or by wasting and uncontrollable diarrhoea.

JUDGE APPLEDORE.

'Tis but a common story,
You hear such every day—
A simple annal, nothing strange,
Why ask me for it, pray?
In early life, when all the world
Was fair to my young eyes,
Before I knew that every hope
We cherish dearest dies;
Before I felt the bitterness
That years for ever bring,
I would not have exchanged my lot
With any reigning king.

'Twas in a quiet village
We lived—Alice and I;
We went to school together
When summer suns were high;
We went to school together
When winter's cruel cold
Planted June roses on her cheeks,
Beneath her hair of gold.
And when she grew to girlhood—
Ah! why the tale repeat?
She took the heart into her life
That I laid at her feet.

I went away. Pride called me
To win myself some fame;
Alice had haughty relatives,
Sticklers of gold and name.
She wept me when I left her,
I kissed away her tears;
We both were young and hopeful,
With little cause for fears.
I came back in the springtime,
She greeted me no more—
A year before she took the name
Of old Judge Appledore.

But she had always loved me—
Her father wrought it all;
Gray-haired he was; I pardoned him,
His sin was past recall.
She died one quiet evening;
It was enough to know
My name was latest on her lips—
Those lips of frozen snow;
And in her hand the violets
I gave her one spring day,
Were clasped so close, they left them
Slumbering with her clay.

Now, when the summer sunsets
Light up the western sky,
And on the mountain's purple steep
The mists of twilight lie,
I feel her presence near me,
And lose my wild unrest—
A vague, sweet something like to her
Makes me supremely blest!
Beside her grave is comfort,
And thither I repair,
Because she always seemeth
Some nearer to me there.

C. A.

LADY VENETIA.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Whose blood
Is wet upon thy threshold?
Within thy heart stir there not, even now,
The: which is torturing thee
With a foreboding presence?

Faust.

On the following morning, neither the marquis nor Baldoni made their appearance at breakfast, but this excited no comment, as Vittorio was often a late riser, and the steward frequently absented himself from the luxurious table of his intended son-in-law.

At length, Luigi, the valet of the marquis, entered the housekeeper's room, looking pale and excited.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked with sudden dread, as she caught the expression of his face.

"Has anything happened to the marquis?"
"I—I hope not; but he isn't in his room, nor has he been there all night. He often tells me not to come to him late at night, and after our return from church, when I knocked, and he did not answer, I supposed he had retired without me, as he often does."

"And he hasn't been in his room at all? That is very strange, and we must see about it directly; you had better go to the priest's house, and inquire if he stayed there with Father Boniface. But that would be a strange thing for him to do."

The man brightened up.
"He may have done so, for he hasn't been a bit like himself of late, nor the least like a happy bridegroom. Maybe he thought the good father could give him some consolation in his repentance of the silly thing he is about to do."

"You're far sillier than he is, or you would not talk in such a manner about your master. Just let her hear of such words, and see how much longer you would be allowed to keep your comfortable home here."

"I'm not afraid of your telling, and one must speak to somebody when one sees his master going to confession as fast as he can. Just to think of Pippa Baldy becoming Lady of Colonna! It's enough to make the old master turn over in his coffin. There! you needn't look so scared; I'll not say another word, but run to La Tempesta as fast as I can."

Just as Luigi was issuing from the door, the young priest who had charge of the chapel, crossed the lawn with a quick, perturbed step. The valet hastily arrested him and said:

"Good morning, holy father, I was just starting for your house to inquire if my master spent the night there. He has not been at the castle, and I am uneasy about him."

The face that was turned to him looked ghastly beneath the wide brimmed hat that shaded it. He briefly said:

"I come hither for assistance to bring the marquis home. He was found in the chapel a short time since wounded and insensible from the loss of blood. Beside him lay a dead man against whom he would have been the last person to raise his hand, had he known him. I must see the old lady who is here, and speak with her, but the Signorina must know nothing of what has occurred, she will learn it soon enough, poor thing, and it will be a terrible shock to her to know that her—"

He suddenly broke off, and hurriedly added:

"Luigi prepare the invalid chair of the old marquis, and take it to La Tempesta with four bearers. Send a messenger on the swiftest horse in the stables for Dr. Strozzi, and tell him that life or death are dependent on his speed."

Appalled by the suddenness of this announcement, the man stood an instant as if spell-bound; but the housekeeper, who had followed him, and overheard every word uttered by the priest, seized his arm, and rapidly said:

"This is no moment to gape at evil news; run for your life to the stables and send a man off for the Doctor. Bring the people with you, and the chair shall be at the door by the time you come back."

Thus aroused, Luigi darted away, and the woman, trembling with agitation, preceded the priest to the room in which Signora Venelli was reading. She could extract from him nothing further than he had already told, and she abruptly opened the door, and pointed to the slender figure of the old lady.

She had quite recovered from the indisposition of the preceding night, and she looked up in much surprise at the apparition of the two excited persons who so unceremoniously entered the apartment. Bowing affably to the priest, she asked:

"To what am I indebted for the honour of your visit, Father?"

"Excuse me, Signora," he hurriedly replied, "but this is no time to stand on ceremony. A dreadful crime has been committed, of which I fear the young marquis will become the victim. He now lies insensible from loss of blood in the room of Father Boniface, and I have come hither for assistance to bring him home."

The Signora sunk back as if ready to faint again, and at that moment Pepita entered. She imperiously asked:

"What is this commotion about? Luigi is rushing across the lawn, as if he had lost his reason, and you all look as if some unimaginable horror has suddenly become known to you. Speak! tell me what has happened—Father John, why do you look so scared and white? Has any evil befallen Vittorio?"

The voice faltered slightly before she finished speaking, for she had caught the contagion of fear from the excited faces around her. The priest compassionately said:

"I would have spared you for a season, Signorina, but now the truth had better be told. The marquis is dangerously wounded, and I came hither for assistance to bring him home."

"Wounded! by whom? In what quarrel? Do not dare to tell me that my betrothed is in danger of dying before I have secured—"

She stopped abruptly—uttered a piercing scream, and fell into violent hysterics; and she was borne

way to her apartment by the housekeeper, and others who rushed in to her assistance.

Signora Vanelli revived sufficiently to inquire into the particulars of the event, and she gathered from the priest that Father Boniface had been attacked with such violent illness just before day that for many hours he could not leave him alone. When the old man at last fell into a tranquil slumber, he entered the chapel to attend to some of his duties there. The first sight that greeted him was two apparently lifeless men, lying within a few feet of the altar, with an extinguished lamp, and a basket filled with empty bottles, between them.

One proved to be the marquis, and on lifting him from the floor he discovered that his heart still faintly beat; but the other was cold, and stiff in death.

"And that other? Who was he?" she asked. "What cause of quarrel had he and the marquis with each other?"

He eagerly replied:

"The dead man was disguised, and he wore a mask. There must have been some dreadful mistake, for the marquis would never knowingly have taken his life."

"Who was it?" she gasped, in uncontrollable agitation. "You have surely removed the mask, and recognized his features. I command you to tell me instantly."

"Signora, summon all your firmness; for the revelation I have to make will be a great shock to you, and I am afraid it will make you ill again."

"No, no. I can bear it better than this dreadful suspense."

"Since you insist, I will tell you. The dead man was Signor Baldoni, the steward."

In spite of her assurance, the listener became deathly pale, and she exclaimed:

"Oh! this is too horrible! Poor, poor Pepita! and for this tragedy to happen almost on the eve of her marriage, too! It will break her heart!"

The housekeeper, who had left Pepita to the ministrations of others, and hurried back to hear all that could be told, now broke in:

"If she had any heart it might break, but that's a thing she never did have. She'll take good care of herself, be sure of that. But we are wasting time, while the best and kindest of masters needs our help. Come, father, I will go with you to the chapel, and assist in bringing the marquis home."

As the priest left the apartment, he said to Signora Vanelli:

"You will break this dreadful news to the steward's daughter as tenderly as you can. When more pressing duties are attended to, I will return, and offer such consolation as our blessed religion may afford."

She bowed, and buried her face in her hands, overwhelmed with the calamity which had marred the brilliant prospects of her favourite. Her father destroyed by the hand of her lover! The bann of blood was upon the proposed union, and even if Vittorio survived, the daughter of Baldoni could never bestow her hand on him who had taken her father's life.

A terrible revelation was this to one she believed adoringly in love with her betrothed, for the simple-hearted woman was as much deceived in her gossamer young companion as the marquis had himself been.

"She will die—it will surely kill her," was her conviction as she arose and prepared to seek Pepita's apartment. She found her lying on the bed in a state of exhaustion from the violent struggles she had undergone; the atmosphere was heavy with the aroma of the stimulants which had been used, and as the visitor drew near her, she cried out:

"He will live—he must live, till I become his wife! Oh! to be banished now!—to find that all I have done is of no avail! I tell you it will kill me if I am not made Marchesa of Colonna. I have set my heart on it; I have schemed for it—worked for it, and now once wretch has dashed all my hopes to the earth! Who said that Vittorio is dying? It shall not be so; I will not give him up even to death, till he has placed upon my finger the ring which will make me the equal of the proudest in the land."

The self-control which she had habitually held over herself seemed to have deserted her, and she uttered these wild ravings without the power to withhold the revelations they made. Shocked, and revolted that no sympathy for her lover's fate was expressed, the signora said:

"I supposed that your love for your betrothed would have inspired you with different feelings. Pepita. You seem to dwell only on what you will lose by his death; not on the young life sacrificed, as his seems to have been."

Her black eyes flashed with a strange expression, and she abruptly said:

"The priest will tell you that the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and I alone can judge of the measure of disappointment Vittorio's death will bring to me. You have no right to sit in judgment upon

me, and I will not bear it. Words uttered under such excitement as I am now suffering from, should go for nothing. Explain this mystery to me; why was the marquis left in the chapel, and who has dared to raise his sacrilegious hand against him in that place?"

"That is the saddest and most mysterious part of the story, and will be the hardest for you to bear, my poor Pepita," spoke the low, compassionate voice of her friend.

Her eyes suddenly dilated to their utmost size; an expression of agonized fear swept over her face; and she clutched her throat with her hands as if to choke back the shrieks that again threatened to break forth. Pointing to the women who still lingered in the room, she huskily said:

"Send them away, and then tell me all you have learned."

Very reluctantly the attendants obeyed the order, for they were yet in a state of feverish suspense as to what had really happened. Closing the door at Pepita's command, Signora Vanelli returned to the bedside to perform the painful duty she had undertaken. The girl now sat up, gathered her fallen hair, and knotted it at the back of her head. When this was done, she turned her rigid face toward her companion, and asked:

"Where is my father? Why does he not come to direct what shall be done in this crisis? It is his place to do so."

"My child, he has done it for the last time. Have you no glimpse of the tragedy that has occurred? Must I speak more plainly?"

Pepita's hands worked nervously, and her face became so convulsed with emotion that the tender-hearted Signora turned her eyes away from it. At last she feebly said:

"They were—in—the chapel—near the altar—I see it all now; and—and—well—well—no matter. I shall be calmer presently, and able to think."

After a pause, in which she evidently struggled for self-control, she asked:

"Was—was my father quite dead? Is there no hope that he may revive?"

"None; he was killed—the priest spoke positively as to that, and I do not think it right to deceive you."

A long, shuddering groan followed the announcement, and for many moments Pepita shook as if suffering from a violent ague.

In those moments she beheld the fabric she had built and cemented on a basis of crime crumbling away at her feet; but above all arose her vindictive hatred to Lucia.

Had the marquis mastered the secret of the subterranean chambers, and would his first act be to release her detested rival from the prison she now felt certain she inhabited?

No—this should never be! Vittorio was insensible—might remain in that condition for days, and if no clue to the mystery of the past night was furnished save through his revelations, Lucia and her companion in captivity might perish of starvation before he was in a situation to have a search made for them.

Then the wicked hope came to her that he might die. He could now be nothing to her, and if he perished, the disgraceful secret which so deeply involved Baldoni's good name would die with him. But few regrets were given to her father's fate; her own bitter disappointment precluded that. She thought only of herself, and how to screen herself from the worst consequences of the discovery that had been made, if the marquis should revive to divulge it.

She soon resolved to shift the odium of all that had been done upon Baldoni; she would profess entire ignorance of his movements or intentions, and she knew that the marquis would still believe her.

But one venomous thought ever recurred; Lucia must never come forth alive to tell her story of wrong and wretchedness; to renew her early engagement with Vittorio. That would be the last bitter drop in her cup of humiliation. After a long silence she turned to Signora Vanelli and said:

"I am stunned by what has happened, and I must be left alone to think on what remains for me to do. I wish to regain my calmness, that I may be in a state to receive Vittorio when he is brought thither, and give him such attention as is due from his betrothed. Even if he did destroy my father, I am quite certain that he did not know him, and therefore I cannot show resentment toward him. Keep every one from my room for one hour; then I will come forth and perform my duty, severe as the task may be."

"I will do as you wish, my child; but you must not think of nursing the marquis. You are in no state to do so, and there are enough here ready to devote themselves to his service without you."

"Well—well—let it be as you wish. Only secure me from interruption for a few hours, and I shall better understand my position, and what it will be right for me to do."

The old lady left her; and no sooner was she alone

than Pepita sprang from the bed, locked the door, and commenced arranging her toilette. She threw a dark mantle over her dress, with a hood to it which covered her head and fell so far over her face as to be used at pleasure to conceal it. The apartment assigned to her maid opened from her own, and it communicated with a private staircase leading to the servants' entrance.

Pepita knew they would all be now upon the lawn awaiting the arrival of their master, and she felt secure that her evasion would not be discovered. Locking the door of communication behind her, she removed the key, and sped down the stairs, out into the open air, and was soon beyond the shrubbery.

There was a narrow, winding path lying through a coppice which led to La Tempesta, and she knew that the wide carriage road would be used by those who conveyed the marquis home, so she had no fears of meeting them. She rightly conjectured that every one who had been drawn to the spot would follow the sad procession to the castle, and when she reached La Tempesta she found the church open and deserted.

Rapidly rushing in, she traversed the aisle, and stood shuddering beside the pool of blood in which she felt assured her father's life had ebbed away. Not long did she pause there, however, for she had something of more moment to attend to than the indulgence of useless regrets; and in that hour she felt only a savage resentment against him for having permitted himself to be so completely entrapped.

Pepita knelt down, and minutely surveyed the floor; she then slowly walked around the pillar, and examined every crevice. The keyhole was found, but the key which was so important to her, was gone! Every nook was examined—even the consecrated vessels on the altar were looked into, but without result, and the wretched creature felt that she was baffled.

"I might enter through the wine-cellar," she muttered, "but it has been repaired and secured so that I could not easily get in. If Vittorio shows signs of speedily recovering, I must do that at all hazards, and end the life and hopes of that detested girl with one blow. She shall never live to reveal the robbery my father perpetrated."

With such dire thoughts in her heart, Pepita sped back to the castle and regained her own apartment without detection. The household was too deeply absorbed in the mysterious horror which had been enacted, to give a thought to her they now felt assured would never be their mistress.

The body of Baldoni was placed in the hall, and the still breathing marquis was laid upon his own bed to await the arrival of the surgeon. Everything had been done to staunch the flow of blood from a wound in his breast, and the housekeeper now sat beside him, moistening his pale lips at intervals with some stimulating liquid, and endeavouring to arrest the grim conqueror by chafing his hands, and applying warm flannels to his feet. He was perfectly unconscious, and at moments those around him feared that the faint pulsation of life had ceased.

CHAPTER XL.

At morn I only wake to find
New horrors.

Goethe.

Patience! and patience! Hence! that word was made
For brutes of burden, not for birds of prey;
Preach it to mortals of a dust like thine!—
I am not of thy order!

Manfred.

At length Dr. Strozzi reined up his foaming steed at the door, and in another moment he was in the apartment of the wounded man, with his fingers upon his pulse and his searching eyes fixed upon his inanimate features.

"This is very like death," he muttered; "but while there's life there's hope, and I will do my best to save him. I must find the ball, and get the wound dressed without delay."

The physician was also a competent surgeon, and he promptly made his arrangements for the operation. As it proceeded a few groans were extracted from the sufferer, which sounded as music in the ears of the operator, for they indicated a degree of vitality he scarcely believed yet lingered in the exhausted frame of his patient.

The marquis had bled so excessively that the physician marvelled that life had not also ebbed away with the life current of which his body had been drained. But soon after the operation was completed, the eyes of the sufferer partially unclosed, and he asked in a faint whisper for water.

With the draught the doctor mingled a few reviving drops, and after swallowing them, Vittorio feebly asked:

"Was the man killed? Who was he—what brought him there?"

"My dear marquis, you must not talk now. The slightest excitement will bring on fever. You are as

weak as a child, and must submit to be treated as one."

He wearily closed his eyes, incapable of carrying out any connected train of thought, and the subject of his inquiry had already escaped him.

The doctor remained and watched beside him with much solicitude. He had many fears that the frail thread which held body and spirit together might be severed in those hours of repose, for he saw the fearful state of weakness into which his patient had fallen. He tasked his utmost skill to save him, and permitted no other calls to draw him from his bedside.

Twilight was gathering in the silent room when a dark-robed figure glided in and approached the couch. The faint light revealed the face of Pepita, white and rigid with the effort she made to control her emotions. A lurid fire gleamed from her dark eyes, and well as Dr. Strozzi knew her, he was startled by her appearance. He spoke to her in suppressed tones.

"This is no place for you, Pepita. You have already endured enough to-day, and your appearance warns me that you should be in bed yourself, with some one to watch beside you."

"I do not need such attention," she replied, in a cold, hard tone. "My duty is here, and I have come to perform it. If this beloved hand did give doom to the author of my existence, it is still that of my betrothed husband—of him who is dear to me as the life-blood of my heart, in spite of the crime he has committed. Oh, doctor, do you think Vittorio himself knew that he was offering violence to my father?"

"He evidently fired in self-defence, Pepita; but I can answer your doubt. The only words the marquis has spoken assured me that he did not know his adversary. The dreadful mystery that envelopes the whole affair had better not be discussed till Vittorio is in a condition to relate what really happened."

She glanced eagerly at the changed face of the sufferer, and said:

"That I fear he never will be again. Look at his sunken features, at the gray shadow around his mouth and eyes. Surely they mean death—death!"

In spite of her efforts to speak in a disconsolate tone, there was a vibration of triumph in the repetition of the last word which betrayed something of what was passing within her.

Dr. Strozzi was an Italian, therefore suspicious. He also had great experience in life, combined with acute observation, and he now fixed his searching gaze upon the set face before him, and felt the assurance that for some cause, unknown to himself, the feelings of Pepita had become bitterly hostile to her lover.

Did she resent his agency in the destruction of her father? Would she seek to avenge it while the marquis lay too helpless to resist a woman's hand?

He suddenly drew her from beside his patient, and firmly, but courteously, said:

"You must leave the room, Pepita. It is not seemly that you should watch beside the bed of the man to whom your father owes his doom. Go to your own apartment and seek repose, or I shall have you on my hands as well as the marquis."

She passively yielded to him, and left the room with an air of pre-occupation, as if his words had made little impression upon her.

By this time the body of the steward had been removed to his own house, and Pepita prepared to go thither.

No one noticed, or endeavoured to stop her. Signora Vancelli, indisposed from the excitement of the day, was lying down in her own room, and the servants, including Pepita's maid, cared little what she now did, or what became of her.

With the certainty that there was no prospect of her becoming lady of the castle, she had lost all interest in their estimation.

The evening air striking upon her bare brow, restored to her the power of thought, and she revolved her future plans with all her usual astuteness. At the worst, she was rich and perfectly independent of control. Her father had secured vast booty from the treasure-chamber, besides the accumulation of his previous life.

She was familiar with his business affairs, and knew that the principal part of his fortune was invested in foreign securities, the remainder was chiefly in gems which had been taken from the coffers of Colonna.

Her errand to her own home was to secure possession of these and of Baldoni's most important papers. As she drew near the house, lights gleamed from the open windows of the front room, and she shivered as she thought of what lay in the white nothingness of death.

As she passed beneath the windows, she heard the voices of the watchers canvassing the mystery of last night's occurrence, and endeavouring to account for the presence of Baldoni and his master in the chapel at so late an hour.

A voice she knew said:

"The marquis must have stayed after the mass was

over, to pray for his poor father—that's how he came there. But Baldoni was after no good, I'll be sworn. Some dreadful crime will be found out yet, be sure of that."

Pepita, with her face even whiter than before, stepped through the open doorway, and fixing her gleaming eyes upon the speaker, haughtily said:

"So it is you, Santani, who dares to malign my dead father, while watching beside his corpse. Such dastardly conduct is worthy of you. Leave this house, if you please. I doubt not that some one more friendly to his memory can be found to take your place."

Her *ex* *dé* *avant* lover regarded her with a crestfallen air. He deprecatingly said:

"I only spoke the general impression, Pepita, for I suppose I may call you that name, now you have stepped down among your own caste again. You know that I would do anything to serve you, even if the world is hard upon your poor father's name."

She passionately replied:

"I ask no service at your hands—will accept of none. Go!" and she pointed imperiously to the door.

Santani, a thick-set, burly young man, flushed through the deep olive tint of his complexion as he passed before her.

With a mock reverence, he said:

"It is your last indignity to me, Pepita. I have borne much from you, but henceforth our paths shall be as wide asunder as I can make them."

"The wider the better for my satisfaction," was the freezing response, and her devoted lover, from her girlhood, left her presence.

She turned toward the other watchers, and went on:

"If you are friends, as your presence here would seem to indicate, spare the memory of the dead till proof is found that he merited his fate."

Without waiting for a reply, she passed rapidly from the room, and gained that of her father. Lettorio, with a sad face, followed her, bearing a lamp in her hand.

She would have spoken, but Pepita waved her hand, and said:

"I read all you would say in your face, Lettorio. Do not speak it now—I cannot bear it. Leave me—I must be alone."

Accustomed to obey her imperious commands without question, the woman left the room without uttering a word, and Pepita immediately secured herself from further intrusion by locking the door.

The next hour was spent in examining the iron chest in which she knew her father's most valuable papers were kept.

She found the vouchers she wished to secure, and took possession of them. There was also a bag of valuable gems, stolen from the treasure-chamber.

Even at such a moment her eyes sparkled with greedy satisfaction as she saw how much larger her fortune was than she supposed.

Her lip curled scornfully as she muttered:

"Why should I grieve over the loss of that puny boy, or the rank he could have conferred on me. Gold is the true alchemist, after all, and I have that. I am beautiful and fascinating, and I will play a more brilliant part than was ever sustained by any Marchesa of Colonna. Why, then, shall I be silly enough to take to heart what has happened to prevent our union. The shock of to-day has unnerved me, but I shall soon be myself again. I shall not return to Colonna; it is not fitting that I should be there now; and by voluntarily returning to my own home, I shall secure the good opinion and sympathy of those with whom it may be as well to keep on friendly terms—at least, while I am near them. I may need their services yet."

Thus meditating, she passed several hours, and then retired to her own apartment, to seek such repose as the excited state of her mind would permit.

The thought of Lucia haunted her imagination. She saw her perishing in the dark prison to which she had been so mercilessly consigned, and she gloated over her rival's sufferings.

At dawn she arose, and despatched a messenger to the castle to learn tidings of its master. Life yet lingered in the frame of the marquis, but there was little change for the better.

Day by day the same report was brought.

On the third one delirium set in, and Vittorio raved incessantly of Lucia. He called on her to return to him again, never to leave him, and implored her pardon for the wrong he had done his love for her by suffering another to hold the place that of right belonged to her.

After Baldoni was consigned to the grave with as little parade as possible, Pepita again visited the castle, to ascertain for herself the condition of the marquis.

Signora Vancelli still remained there, and she de-

clared her intention to do so till the fate of her young kinsman was decided.

Dr. Strozzi wore a grave and pre-occupied air; he seldom left the apartment of his patient, and when he did an eminent surgeon, who had been summoned to his assistance from Catania, took his place, and the two watched alternately over the fluctuating life they were so anxious to save.

After a brief visit to the signora, Pepita insisted on seeing the marquis. She stood beside the bed, and looked down on the flushed face and haggard eyes of the sufferer, with the hope that he would never again rise from the couch of pain to tell the story of her father's infamy, or furnish a clue to the mystery which enshrouded that fatal night.

Vittorio's eyes fell on her and his voice arose in a wild cry:

"Take her away! Let her not come near me! What does she here? She is not my heart's own one—my darling! I have missed her too long—my heart has wearied for her, and that is why I am here and thus! Oh—will no one remove this baleful presence from me. Her eyes are like living flames of fire, and they burn into my soul! She once subdued me to her will, but I will be freed from her, even at the price of life itself!"

Dr. Strozzi laid his hand upon her shoulder, and spoke in a guarded tone:

"Come away with me, Pepita, your presence excites him so fearfully that it may prove fatal. It is often thus in delirium, and those who are dearest are driven from the presence of the sufferer."

She moved away at his command, and said, with a slight shiver:

"It is terrible. Alas! he surely cannot recover." Again his piercing glance read her soul, and he replied, with icy coolness:

"It may be to your interest that the marquis should never regain the power to reveal what passed on that fatal night. You have never loved this man, Pepita, nor do I now think he had any real regard for you. Make such arrangements as will ensure your own safety, for even if Vittorio dies, he will recover his reason beforehand, clearly enough to explain why he and your father met in that deadly encounter."

With sudden fire, she retorted:

"Why should you presume to warn me thus? If there has been wrong, I had nothing to do with it—was not aware of its existence; then why should my safety be compromised?"

"You may speak truth, and if you do, my warning is superfluous. If you do not, you had best act on it, that is all I have to say."

He closed the door on her and returned to his watch. She dared not probe his suspicions too deeply, and after a moment of irresolution she turned her steps homeward, with the determination to make preparations for an immediate departure, if she should find it necessary to seek safety in flight.

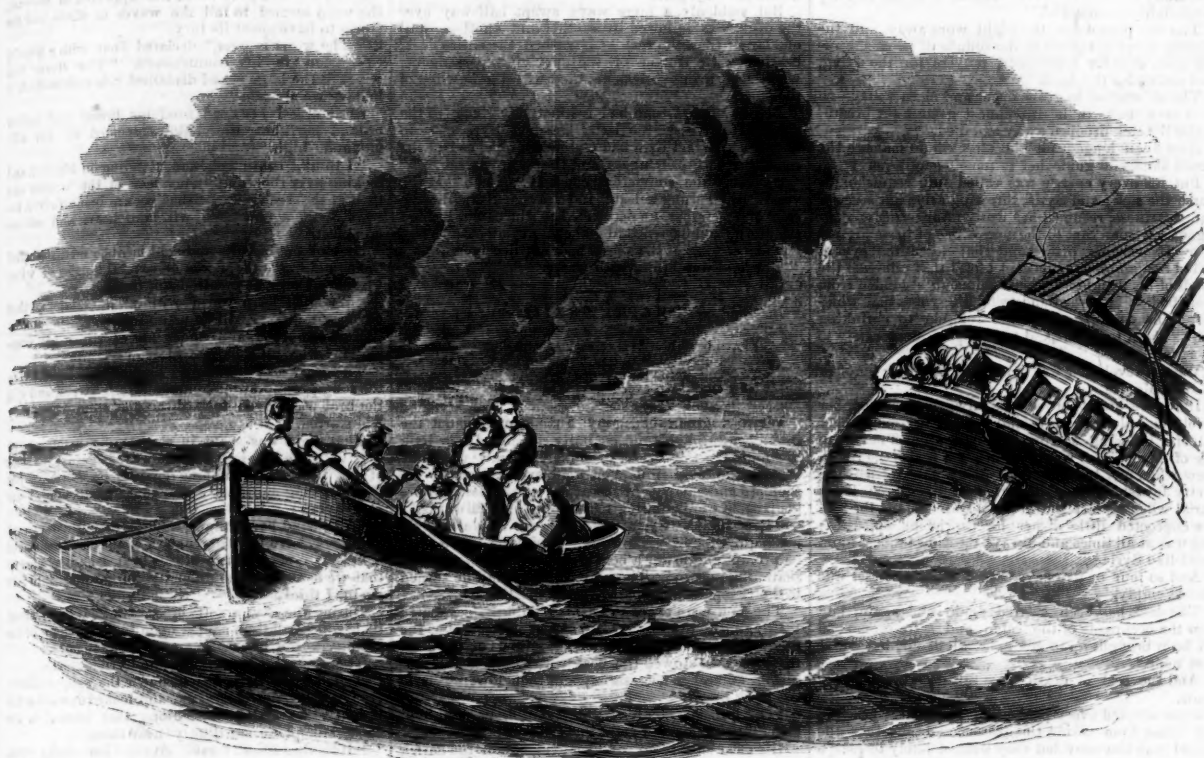
The only consolation for the humiliation she endured was found in counting the days and calculating how long the store of provisions last furnished to the captives could last. Every week she knew that her father had visited them, and the empty basket found beside him, told her on what errand he had gone on the night of his doom. At the close of the seventh day she muttered,

"Now they are in darkness—they will soon suffer the knowing pangs of hunger—but I will die sooner than give a sign. Let her perish, she shall never come forth to claim her rich inheritance, to bask in the sunshine of happiness! And she clenched her hands, and looked her lips in dread silence over the fearful doom she awarded her rival.

The eighth day passed—the ninth one was coming to a close—and Pepita was calculating how long those hapless beings could endure the accumulated evils of their lot, when the news was brought from the castle that the marquis had regained the clearness of his mind, that he had spoken rationally, and strong hopes were entertained of his recovery. Pepita hurried thither to hear the tidings confirmed. A great change for the better had taken place, and the crisis was regarded by his medical attendant as past; she also learned that he had spoken of the occurrences of that night, but was unable to explain them, he had learned the existence of subterranean chambers beneath the chapel, knew the entrance, and had issued orders to have the key sought for till it was found!"

Pepita listened in inexpressible dismay till it was added that the marquis wished the examination of the vaults postponed till he was sufficiently recovered to join in the exploration himself. In his present state of weakness that must ensure the destruction of the captives, and she returned to her own cottage calm and triumphant. If he only adhered to this whim, what sweet vengeance did it secure to her, for the humiliating fall from the pinnacle of prosperity to her present position.

(To be continued.)



[THE ESCAPE FROM THE PLAGUE SHIP.]

THE SWORD MAKER OF TOLEDO.

CHAPTER XXII.

Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
There is no speculation in those eyes
That thou dost glare with!

Macbeth.

THE next moment, as he had expected, Captain Belle opened the door and looked in.

"Is there a young seaman here?" he demanded. "No, I see. Two dead men, one dead girl, and an old man who is dying. Look elsewhere, lieutenant, and be quick about it. We are all catching the plague here. If you don't find him immediately, we must be off and leave him to his fate!"

He departed, and Juan lay quite still until they had all left the cabin, and then he arose and took Syria in his arms, chafing her hands and bathing her face with water from a basin that stood near.

"Explain what this means!" said Ben Israel. "Who was that dark-looking man who looked in here? Where did he come from? How did you get here?"

In reply, Juan briefly narrated his adventures, and the old Jew grasped his hand in affectionate sympathy.

"There they go!" cried Juan, joyfully, as the sound of orders to cast off the grappling irons came to his hearing. "There—they they go!"

His words were true—the pirates had spread all sail in their haste to escape the infectious plague-ship.

They had gone off, hearing, but not heeding, the prayers of the dying crowd for aid, their coward souls appalled at the scene they had witnessed.

"Syria, darling, look up! speak to me!" wailed Juan, startled at her death-like face. "It is Juan, come to save you!"

Unheeding the presence of Ben Israel, or the startled, questioning gaze of Rafael Ezra, Juan in his agony, continued to call upon Syria to look at him, and rained kisses upon her pure, sweet face.

His exertions were at length rewarded, Syria opening her dusky eyes with a look of recognition, and whispering faintly:

"Oh, Juan, I have needed you so! God has sent you to us in our need!"

Juan brightened with hope and joy, and then released her, arranging a seat for her beside himself, and said:

"I see that Don Rafael is sick. But you, Ben Israel, and Syria, do not look plague-smitten!"

"We are not," rejoined Ben Israel, gratefully. "We have been mercifully preserved, though how and why, I know not. One reason may be that I have insisted upon taking the air on deck with Syria every day to fortify ourselves against infection. There are not more than half-a-dozen on board beside ourselves who are in their usual health."

"Where are the captain and crew?" asked Juan. "Why is the vessel anchored? If you could only make some port and land, many of these lives would be saved."

"I know it," said Ben Israel; "but the captain was the first to die. Most of the crew have followed him. It seems they had the plague on board on their voyage to Valencia, and that one of the sailors was ill with it when we started. We were so overcrowded that it quickly spread, carrying off our people by the score. Syria and I have devoted ourselves to the sick, as have the few others who retain their health. We have cooked for them, fed them, nursed them, consoled them, received their dying messages to distant friends, although not knowing the moment when we ourselves should be stricken, and we have laid many in their graves beneath this sea!"

He leaned his head wearily on his arm, and Juan noticed for the first time how sharp were his noble features, how dim his dark eyes.

"You have worked too hard, Ben Israel!" he said, pityingly. "I will take your place, and you shall rest."

"It is Syria who has worked too hard," said her father. "As for me, I have long felt a presentiment—there, there Syria, don't look so scared!" he added, fondly and soothingly. "You must lie down and sleep."

"Perhaps I can find her a better place," suggested Juan. "At any rate I will see."

He went out into the cabin, where scores of eyes greeted him with curious glances, and passed into state-room after state-room, soon finding one that was deserted.

To this one he carried Syria's blankets, and he opened the little window, admitting the soft pure air from without, soon making the apartment fresh and sweet, and then he carried Syria thither and laid her upon her bunk.

"Now go to sleep," he said, with his grave tenderness. "You must not awake until I arouse you. You have waited upon others so much that you are entirely worn out, and I shall be your nurse. I am going to bring Ben Israel in and lay him in the berth above yours, so that you will not be worried about him."

He went for him, and soon supported him into the state-room, and lifted him into his berth. And then, leaving the father and daughter to the sleep they so much needed, he returned to Rafael Ezra.

"I am not much of a physician, Don Rafael," he said, feeling his pulse, "but I should judge that you were not very ill. We shall soon have you on your feet, if you will make no exertion, and just give up to your illness."

Rafael Ezra could not resist the hearty kindness of Juan. He forgot that he was his rival with Syria, and felt his heart warm towards him for his delicate attentions and encouraging manner.

"He deserves Syria, angel as she is!" was his mental comment. "But he can never have her—that is impossible!"

He turned his face to the open window and looked out upon the sunlight and the waters, and soon yielded to sleep, while Juan softly withdrew, and began his attentions to the occupants of the other state-rooms and the cabin.

After making them all more comfortable, he ascended to the deck, where the sun beat fiercely upon the unprotected faces of the dead and dying.

His first movement was to stretch an awning of sails and blankets over the entire deck, which warded off the hot rays of the sun, and permitted a cool breeze to play underneath. He arranged the blankets and pillows of the suffering ones, gave them water and cheering words, and then proceeded to tie up in their own blankets the dead bodies, and commit them to the deep.

It took him more than two hours to bury the dead in the grave that waited to receive them, but he received some assistance in the task by a few persons who remained well.

Finally he sent these to bed, and went to work to prepare dinner. There was a great plenty of food on board, and he soon had a simple meal prepared, which he distributed to the sick throughout the vessel, taking some to Rafael Ezra, and some to Ben Israel and Syria.

"You will kill yourself, Don Juan," said Ben Israel, as he and Syria ascended to the deck with their hero. "You have done what none of us had the strength to do. I fear that you yourself will soon be down with the plague."

"Do not fear for me," responded Juan, with a cheerful smile. "I am young and healthy. I can bear a great deal. You and Syria are my patients now, and I prescribe plenty of fresh air and rest. You must look at the sky and the water; watch the fishes in the water, see the play of the sunlight, and look for clouds

overhead. If we can only have rain, I think the people will many of them be saved. The air is so hot and dry now—fairly pestilential."

The day passed and the night wore away, and the floating hospital echoed to the sounds of groans, wailing cries, calls for loved ones, prayers for the dying, and moans for the dead.

The air seemed to grow dryer and more sultry—so that even those in health almost gasped for breath, while the sick drooped away and died.

How Juan longed for the strength to manage the vessel alone and guide her to some friendly port!

But his every energy was called into requisition, to nurse the sick; and Syria, throwing aside her languor and weariness, resumed her work, ministering as only a gentle woman can, to the necessities of those around her. It was her little hand that closed the eyes of Rabbi Benjamin, her innocent breast that pillowed the heads of his daughters when their souls ascended from their bodies, her sweet and trembling voice that whispered the consolations of her religion to shivering spirits about to depart and yet clinging desperately to this life.

What a revelation was her gentle, untiring heroism to Juan Montes.

Her pure, sweet brow was always unruffled, her lovely face always gentle and patient, her dusky eyes full of a brooding sorrow, and she seemed never to tire of her painful work. She stood beside the rough crew when one by one they died; she nestled the pretty Jewish babe in her arms, and prepared it for burial when its last fretful wail had died on the air; she concocted little dishes for capricious appetites; and was at all times and always the same innocent and child-like Syria.

And so four or five days passed, and the vessel was almost empty.

The deck had been cleared again and again, and now the occupants of the cabin and state-rooms had all been brought up to get a breath of air, but there was none.

And the seal of death was set on almost every brow.

Juan adopted every precaution to shield Syria and her father from taking the disease, and now that the vessel was less crowded they seemed likely to escape it.

Rafael Ezra was convalescent, and lying upon the deck with the rest.

"I think there'll be a storm soon," said Syria, her spirited face lighted up by a sudden glow of hope. "See that dark cloud yonder. We shall have rain. The wind may rise soon, although the air is so dead now."

"I think it will, darling," responded Juan, tenderly; "but it will do these sick people no good. The change will be too violent, if they should live till then. But they will not. Not one of those sick ones will live till sunset."

"Oh, Juan!" cried the maiden, "can this be true? Why, there will then be not more than seven survivors on the ship to-night! And none of us know how long we may be spared. I seem to be face to face with death; but, Juan, I do not fear it!"

A spasm passed over Ben Israel's face. He knew well why life had lost its hold upon Syria's heart—why she had no fear of death.

Sunset came, and when its dull glow had faded upon the murky air, but seven persons remained upon the Santa Maria—but seven souls had been passed over by the still reaper.

"We are saved, Don Rafael!" exclaimed Juan, as a ripple came across the waters that had so lately looked like glass. The wind is rising. The air will soon be cleared. Take courage, and all will be well."

The bodies of the dead had been scarcely consigned to the deep, when a low and sullen roar, like the booming of a gun, sounded over the waters, and a sudden darkness fell upon the scene.

The tempest had begun.

The long prayed-for wind arose and went shrieking through the cordage of the vessel, dashing the white-capped inky waves against her sides, and then howled along the surface of the sea, making a roar and din that was terrible.

The siffling lightning flashed brokenly along the black sky, revealing jagged masses of clouds, all waiting to pour their volumes into the raging sea. The thunder crashed with deafening roar, while the wind and the waves fought like infuriated demons.

In the terror and the darkness, Syria sought refuge in Juan's arms, and neither Ben Israel nor Rafael Ezra raised a hand to detain her.

"Are we safe, Don Juan?" asked Ben Israel, turning his white face in the direction of Juan. "Will the anchor hold?"

"I hope so, but cannot tell," was the reply. "We have escaped the plague—perhaps to die by the storm! We can do nothing save to pray and wait."

The storm increased to a gale that threatened to destroy them. The vessel rocked and rolled on the

surging waves, but her anchor held and hope did not desert the voyagers.

But, suddenly, a huge wave swept half-way over the deck, was followed by another and another, until one larger than the rest had washed the entire deck, bearing with it one of the surviving passengers, whose despairing shrieks mingled with the howling of the storm.

Ben Israel and Juan had instinctively clung to the sides of the vessel, the latter clasping Syria close to his breast, Rafael Ezra had clutched a rope, as had the remaining two passengers, and they were safe.

Suddenly the conviction came upon Juan that the vessel had sprung a leak, and leaving Syria to the care of her father, he descended to the cabin, lighted a lantern, and hastened to make an examination.

The lurching of the vessel had not deceived him.

The hold was filling with water.

CHAPTER XXIII

Many a time

I have been half in love with careful death,—
Called him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it best to die.

Keats

With a groan of agony Juan contemplated the rapidly-filling hold, and mentally calculated how long it would take the vessel to sink. He saw that they were in the utmost danger, and summoning all his coolness and energy, he returned to the deck, where his friends were clinging to the ropes and bulwarks.

"Ben Israel, Syria, friends," he began, in his usual quiet tones, "the vessel is sinking. We must be prompt and lower a boat and provision her, or we shall all go down! These gentlemen," and he turned to the two passengers, "will assist me."

The men were eager to do his bidding.

Clinging to the ropes when a wave swept over the deck, reeling with the staggering lurches of the ship, the three men stowed the boat with blankets and provisions and other necessities, and then lowered it to the black abyss.

"Get into her, both of you," said Juan. "I will bring our friends and hand them down to you."

His clear shrill tones sounded louder than the shriek of the gale.

He then hastened to Ben Israel, telling him that all was ready for their departure.

"But, Juan," said the old man, "a small boat can never live in a sea like this. It would be swamped! I fear to trust our lives to it. Would it stand such a storm, when a vessel like this is foundered?"

"It is our only chance!" returned Juan. "If we stay here, we are certain to perish. If we take to the little boat, we have a chance of safety."

The lightning's flash revealed to his companions Juan's drenched garments, his streaming hair, his glowing face, so undaunted and so full of bravery, and Ben Israel took heart, and said:

"We will go, Juan. Take Syria first."

Juan caught Syria in his arms and crossed the deck with her, then lowered her into the boat, where the men received her.

"Rafael Ezra next," said Ben Israel.

And Juan took the young Jew next, and handed him down to his friends, then returning and catching up Ben Israel, whom he also lowered, and then he sprang in himself, and pushed off from the ship.

"We escaped barely in time," he said, as they found themselves rocking violently about on a tumultuous sea, and then driven like a feather before the wind. "To have remained on the ship would have been certain death. See there!"

A vivid flash of lightning lighted up the scene, and they saw the ship tremble like an affrighted animal, give a convulsive shudder, and then the waves parted to receive her, and closed above her in foaming triumphant billows.

Although the boat had placed quite a distance between her and the Santa Maria, its occupants seemed to feel strong hands pulling it downward, and it was several moments before they were beyond all danger of being engulfed in the raging whirlpool the sinking of the ship had caused.

"We are, indeed, alone now in a furious and treacherous sea," said Rafael Ezra.

"There is but a plank between us and death. God preserve us!"

The prayer was echoed by every heart within the little boat, but all lapsed into silence, the storm being too loud and terrible to permit much conversation, and the boat requiring constant care.

Juan covered Ben Israel and Rafael with blankets, and then folded a couple round Syria, and held her closely in his arms, resolved, if they were to be drowned, they would at least die together.

And the storm raged on, the waves beat into the boat, drenching its occupants with spray, the lightning flared through the mourning sky, and all was horror and desolation.

Morning brought a change.

With the first gray cloud that appeared in the east, the wind seemed, to lull, the waves to abate, and the storm to have spent its fury.

"The worst is over," declared Juan with a hopeful expression in his countenance. "The storm that wrecked the large vessel disdained this cockle-shell. I believe we are safe!"

Syria raised her head from his breast and looked around her, but the billows seemed to her still mountain-high.

"I think," continued Juan, standing on his seat, and looking over the tumultuous face of the waters and then at the rising sun, "that we are being driven toward Spain again. We will take heart and eat our breakfast."

He took out biscuits and cold meats, and distributed them, and broke the necks of several bottles of wine, urging his companions to drink freely.

"We must keep warm within," he said, "so that our wet garments will do us no injury."

He was obeyed, and under his exertions his companions were all soon in a glow of warmth.

The day passed slowly. The billows subsided to the long ground-swell common after a storm, and still the boat was driven toward the port from which they had started.

That night was spent in sleep, under a soft, starry sky, with the humming of the waves against the sides of the boat and thumping against its bottom; but the following morning Juan ventured to spread the sail, saying:

"The wind has changed, and is taking us seaward again. I have learned enough of the management of a vessel, to take charge of this boat, tack her, etc., so that we shall have no difficulty in getting into port again, I think."

During the day a soft breeze wafted them along their course, the sun smiled upon the deep blue of the Mediterranean, and fishes sported near them.

There remained no sign of the terrible storm.

And at night they floated under the soft, southern sky, breathed the balmy air, and looked upward at the radiant stars and constellations, that seemed in the clear atmosphere startlingly near them.

"How beautiful!" said Syria, her dusky eyes, bright as the glowing worlds above her. "This is a lovely earth, father, and would be a Paradise, if men were only good and gentle."

Ben Israel signed, and assented.

Although so little acquainted with the management of a sail, Juan handled it very well, so that after several days they came in sight of the land. They found themselves below Valencia, but turned their course northward and at length entered the Guadalquivir.

"What are we to do, Juan?" asked Ben Israel, leaning back against a pile of blankets. "You know that we depend upon you."

"Our best plan is to go direct to Valencia," replied our hero, thoughtfully, "and go back to the same inn where we stopped before. The proprietor was a Jew, as you knew, and it is possible that he may not have left the city. If he has, we have a boat and provisions, so that we shall not be troubled for food and lodgings, while we remain. I will see if I can get passage for you to some foreign shore. If I fail, I will remain with you and look after your comfort."

Ben Israel pressed Juan's hand gratefully, and a hectic flush burned brightly upon his cheeks, as he thanked him for his noble friendship.

Arrived at Valencia, they moored alongside a wharf, and Juan made preparations to leave his friends in the boat, and inquire among the shipping for some vessel about to sail. The two passengers who had survived the plague on the Santa Maria now took an affecting leave of them all, stating that they were going to look for some immediate avenue of escape from the country, and should not return to the boat.

Juan was about to follow them, when a strange and desolate-looking figure came upon the wharf, and looked idly seaward. There was something about the woman that looked familiar to him, but her shoes were worn out with ceaseless wanderings, her dress hung about her thin form in tatters, her cloak was rent and stained, and her ragged veil was tied over her hood, leaving her sunburnt and gaunt features in full view.

"Syria, do you know yonder woman?" he asked, directing the maiden's attention to the desolate creature. "Who can she be?"

One glance was enough for Syria.

"Esther!" she exclaimed, joyfully. "It is Esther!"

The woman heard the cry and gazed at the maiden a moment as if stupefied; then with a joyful scream she darted forward, sprang into the boat, and folded her young mistress in her arms.

"I have lived to see her again," she sobbed. "My prayers are answered."

Syria soothed and calmed her, and Ben Israel greeted her with marked emotion.

"I thought we had lost you for ever," he said, in a choking voice. "When we were carried to the robber's cave, I never expected to see you again."
"Oh!" sobbed Esther, "when that Donaldo carried you off I was stupefied, and could not speak; but you had fairly passed into the gorge when I recovered my senses and flew after you, begging to be taken with you. But I was too late. Rabbi Benjamin held me back and tried to dissuade me. We came on to Valencia together. In a crowd that thronged the streets I lost him and the company. I have never seen them since, although I searched for them daily!"

"And how have you lived?" inquired Ben Israel.
"By begging from our unfortunate countrymen," replied Esther. "I have slept in the open air, like they have done. If I could only find Rabbi Benjamin—"

"My poor Esther," said Ben Israel, "I will tell you of him. We were rescued from the robbers' cave by Don Juan Montes, whom you see with us. This gentleman with us is Rafael Ezra, Syria's betrothed, whom we found shut up in the cavern."

Esther wiped her eyes, and bowed to Rafael.
"We all came together to Valencia," continued Ben Israel, "and the same day took passage in a vessel bound for Syria. We had hardly left the shores of Spain beyond our sight, when one of the cabin passengers came on deck. Judge our surprise on beholding Rabbi Benjamin. He had lost you, as you say, much to his sorrow, and hearing of this ship, had brought his whole party aboard immediately, borrowing money enough of a friend whom he met in the city to pay their passage. The vessel did not sail as soon as he expected, and by a strange providence we also went on board of her. The plague broke out, and Rabbi Benjamin and his lovely daughters died of it, and were buried in the sea."

Esther demanded to know how Juan happened to be with them on their return, and Syria explained the whole story.

"How strange!" ejaculated Esther. "And so you are looking for a vessel now, Don Juan—or going to look for one? You can't do anything without plenty of money. As the end of the four months draws near, the captains charge fearful prices, and overload their vessels besides."

"I was foolish to think of doing anything without money," Ben Israel said Juan, thoughtfully. "I will return to Toledo and get all that will be necessary. There will be no use even in making inquiry here without money."

"You are right, Don Juan," said Rafael Ezra. "We are powerless without money."

"I think," continued our hero, that I had better remove you four to some secure place in the woods, and leave you there until my return. I left my horse at that inn, you remember, and if I can get it again I will hasten to Toledo. If I fail to get the animal I shall have to walk thither."

This being the only plan they could decide upon, Juan hastened to the inn and found it closed, the proprietor having left the country.

"What shall I do?" he thought, despairingly. "They may die before I can walk to Toledo. Oh, if I had only some friend here!"

He racked his brain to think of some person in Valencia to whom he could apply in his hour of need, and as he wandered through the streets, he suddenly paused, a favourable thought having come to him.

"There is that sword-dealer, Lavano, here," he thought. "He has bought a great many swords of us for the Valencia trade, and we have let him have them on credit often, though, unfortunately, he does not owe us anything now. I will apply to him. He can do no more than refuse me."

He inquired the way to Lavano's shop, and soon confronted its proprietor.

"Glad to see you in Valencia, Don Juan," said Lavano, cordially. "You will stop with me, of course."

"No, thank you, senor," returned Juan; "but I have no time to spend here. I want to borrow a good horse and some money, if you can lend them to me. I will return both within the fortnight."

"How much money?" asked Lavano.

"As much as you can spare," replied Juan, a hope entering his heart that he might be able to secure enough without journeying to Toledo.

"I'd like to oblige you, Don Juan," said Lavano, "but I cannot spare more than a dozen pieces of gold at present. Will those do?"

Juan bowed, and took them mechanically.

"As to the horse," continued the shopkeeper, "I've got a most splendid animal, fleet of foot and long of wind. She can stand any amount of hard work, and I think the world can't equal her. I'll lend her to you, though, for the time mentioned."

Juan grasped Lavano's hand cordially, and thanked him for his friendly kindness.

"I have a little business in the city," he said, "which I must transact before coming for the horse. I shall probably be here before nightfall."

This arranged, Juan, with a lighter heart, wended his way back to the quay.

He related to his friends his good fortune, and said:

"We had better continue up the river until we come to some safe and secluded spot, where I can leave you."

Ben Israel and Rafael agreed to whatever Juan thought best; and the sail was set, the boat pushed out into the stream, and they commenced their course up the river. In the course of a few hours they came to the mouth of a creek bordering the river, and into this they directed the boat, and Juan soon moored her to the spreading root of a huge tree close to the bank. The retreat he had chosen was beautiful and secluded. The plentiful branches overhanging the little creek, casting deeper shade upon the water; and through the rifts in the foliage, golden sunbeams came to add their beauty to the scene. The banks on either side were carpeted with green bushes, and trees formed screening thickets, and, as Syria said, the spot seemed made on purpose for them.

"You have provisions in plenty," said Juan. "There are springs about here I doubt not, and you will be comparatively comfortable in my absence. I will return as soon as I can."

He hung a blanket from the mast of the boat to a branch of the tree, making a neat shelter for them; and after a few further observations, shook hands with every member of the little party, giving Syria's a long, lingering pressure, in place of the kiss he yearned to exchange with her but could not.

"She belongs to another!" he thought, as he finally turned away. "My caresses were allowable when we were out upon the stormy sea, expecting death, but now I must not forget that she is betrothed to Rafael Ezra."

He struck through the wood to a path which led to the city, where he arrived a little past nightfall. He hastened directly to the residence of Senor Lavano, procured his horse, declining an invitation to remain to supper, and was soon dashing along the road beyond the city gates.

"Oh, for speed like the wind!" he ejaculated. "Their lives hang upon my movements! Should I be detained by any accident, they may languish and die! If Count Garcia should learn of their or my return, we should all be overwhelmed with one horrible fate! On! on!"

His horse seemed to feel the impatience of his rider, and sped along like the wind.

(To be continued.)

WOMAN AND HER MASTER.

By J. F. SMITH, Esq.,

Author of "The Jewit," "The Prelude," "Minnigrey," &c.

CHAPTER CXLV.

Oh, a cherubim
Thou wert, that didst preserve me! Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from heaven,
When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,
Under my burthen groaned; which raised me up
Against what should ensue. *Shakespeare.*

In an instant Athalie was calm and self-possessed: she felt that the dying man more than suspected her knowledge of the hand which fired the shots.

"Raise him up!" said Sir Thomas Liddle.

The butler, who was kneeling at the head of the sofa, propped up the wounded man with cushions.

"I fear it will be useless!" whispered Captain Ker to his host; "he cannot speak."

"Why not?" demanded the earl, in the same undertone.

"Because he is bleeding to death internally: the blood will choke him."

"You had better question him, Godfrey," whispered his grace; "He will be more likely to recognize your voice."

"Yes—certainly," observed his lordship—who, without exactly knowing why, felt anxious to delay the examination—in the charitable hope, perhaps, that he would die before his words were taken down: "but it is not necessary that he should be cautioned."

"Cautioned!" repeated the gentlemen.

"Told that he is dying, or something of that sort. You know that I very seldom act as a magistrate; but such, I believe, is the practice. It strikes me, my dear sir," he added, turning to the clergyman, "that you will be the most fitting person."

The Reverend Mr. Mark Hathaway readily assented. He felt delighted at the opportunity of displaying his oratorical powers in the presence of a minister of the Crown—one of those favoured few who have the leaves and fishes of the church to distribute.

He commenced by a long and eloquent peroration on the uncertainty of life and the necessity of repentance—to which everyone present, except Athalie and the earl, listened with considerable impatience.

"You forget, reverend sir," said the duke, somewhat sarcastically, "that the man is dying all this while."

"Now, question him," continued his grace, as soon as the clergyman had concluded; "he has been duly informed of his precarious state."

"Do you know who shot you?" inquired his master, advancing to the side of the sofa.

The domestic nodded his head in the affirmative.

"He does!" exclaimed the gentlemen.

The Frenchman drew near to the group which surrounded the dying man.

"Poachers?"

The sufferer shook his head in the negative.

"I said not," observed Captain Ker.

The door of the servants' hall opened, and Kelf made his appearance: his countenance was very pale, and his eyes looked wild and haggard. The instant he beheld him, the features of his victim became dreadfully convulsed. It was evident he was making a violent effort to speak. Finding it impossible, he slightly raised his hand. Athalie seized it in an instant, lest the dying man should point out his murderer.

"Pray for him!" she exclaimed, addressing the clergyman; "he is going!"

A few minutes later, and all was over.

Satisfied that she had no longer anything to fear, the governess, with the assistance of Fifi, succeeded in removing Julia from the scene of death. The agonies, the despair, of the poor girl awoke a late and useless remorse within the breast of her unnatural parent: she watched over her, and, had she dared, would have prayed for her; but prayer was denied her.

The punishment of the murderess had commenced.

"A sad affair, Kelf," said his master, addressing the keeper.

"Very, my lord," replied the ruffian, endeavouring to recover his self-possession, which had been somewhat shaken on finding one of his victims still living; "the shot was doubtless intended for me."

"No wonder, then, that you appear so pale and agitated, my man," observed the duke, who perfectly recollected him, from the circumstance of his short stay in his service, years previously, in the Highlands. "You still attribute the murder of this gentleman," he added, "to his having been mistaken for you?"

"No doubt of it, your grace."

"And by poachers?" demanded the baronet.

"Who else, Sir Thomas?" replied the villain; "the county swarms with them: it is not a month since the keepers at Ravensworth were attacked and beaten. Even the preservers of Alawick," he added, "cannot be kept free from them."

The groom soon after arrived, accompanied by the surgeon and several of the police from Filton. The services of the former were too late. All the officers except one remained to guard the mansion—and he accompanied the keeper back to his lodge.

Sir Thomas Liddle and the clergyman—who were both magistrates—promised the earl to ride over at an early hour in the morning.

The only person who did not feel satisfied that the true explanation of the affair had been arrived at was Captain Ker—a cool, long-headed man of the world. He had noticed the excitement of his host, the action of Athalie when she took the hand of the dying domestic in hers: he felt assured that there was some mystery, and was resolved, if possible, to fathom it to its source.

He and the surgeon walked back to Filton together. They were old friends, in the habit of meeting daily, and could speak in the most perfect confidence to each other.

"What think you," he demanded of his companion, after they had passed the lodge, "of this story of the poachers? Strange, is it not?"

"Very!"

"The murder committed so near to the mansion, too! Stranger still; I can't tell what to make of it."

"Nor I."

"The duke, I saw, was staggered."

The village Esculapius, who was a man of but few words, contented himself by merely shrugging his shoulders.

"My dear fellow," continued the speaker, "positively you must do me a service."

"What service?" demanded his friend.

"Oh, a very slight one," was the reply. "Of course you will be called in to examine the bodies of the murdered men, and give your evidence before the inquest?"

"Doubtless," was the reply of the surgeon; "and what then?"

"Why, then, the service I would ask is, that, without saying a word to anyone, you will contrive to bring the balls, after you have extracted them, to me. Don't ask me my reasons for this request—I cannot give them. It would be unjust! A whim—a caprice—nothing more."

His companion looked at him earnestly, and Captain Ker saw that he was not deceived by his affected indifference upon the subject.

"Well, then," he added, "a suspicion—but at present so slight, the clue so fine, that it would be unjust to utter it even to one as discreet as you are. Do you promise me?"

"I do," replied the man of science; "and that without asking any further question: it is enough that you request it."

So saying, the two gentlemen shook hands and parted.

When the viscount and Dick alighted at the inn in Fulton, it was with the intention of proceeding that very night to the abbey; as we before stated, their only motive in not riding as far as the lodge, was the unaccountable desire of the latter to avoid their travelling companion—a feeling which happily preserved them both from the cruel fate prepared by the unprincipled Athalie.

This delay, coupled with their previous one at Durham, enabled Captain Vernon and his companions—who had posted as fast as money could bribe the postillions to drive—to overtake them just as they were setting forth on their adventurous expedition.

"Dick! Fred!" shouted the anxious parent, as the chaise drove into the inn yard, at the instant the young men were quitting it. They knew his voice, and turned: the next minute the gallant captain held them in his arms. "Thank God," he murmured, as he pressed the viscount to his manly breast, "that I am in time. I ought to have foreseen this—have provided against the excitement, the rashness, which the disclosure of your mother's wrongs and sufferings was sure to create in a heart like yours. Had you proceeded a step farther," he added, "I should never have forgiven myself."

"You do not blame me, my friend—benefactor—father!" replied the young lieutenant. "Alas!" he added, with a sigh, "you are the only being whom I can ever honour by that name! If you reject me, I have no other father!"

"Reject you!" repeated the veteran; "if I do, may— But there, this is no place for conversation; return with us to the inn—Goliath and Mr. Palgrave are in the chaise. You must be guided by our advice. Trust to older heads than your own or Dick's."

Probably there was no other being in the world for whom the unhappy youth—burning to avenge his mother's wrongs—would have delayed the execution of his project; as it was, he consented, but with an ill grace.

"I cannot refuse you," he said, "even though the compliance with your wish appears like a dereliction of duty. Did you know," he added, "how I burn with impatience till I behold my mother—how I long to clasp her in my arms—to kiss away her tears—to tear her from the hands of her cruel persecutors—you would pity my impatience, instead of blaming it."

"I do not blame it, Fred, replied his guardian; "I beg pardon—my lord!" he added correcting himself.

"Not that word!" said the young man, pressing his hand; "not that word, if you love me! It sounds like a mockery from your lips. I feel as if I had lost my share in your affection when you utter it!"

"But the name of Frederick, my dear boy, is no longer yours," observed the captain.

"Call me Digby, then!" replied his ward; "that name must content me till I can exchange it for the dearer one of son."

At the entreaty of all present, the speaker consented to postpone his visit to the abbey till the following morning—although the hours would seem an age till then—when it was agreed that Captain Vernon, Goliath, and Mr. Palgrave should accompany him. So supported, they felt that it would be impossible for his unnatural father either to deny his claims or to plot against the safety of his son.

The party had been seated in a private room in the little inn more than an hour, when the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard in the courtyard, and a voice calling out lustily for a chaise.

"Something has occurred!" observed Goliath.

Without speaking a word, Dick quietly left the room, and in a few minutes returned, looking as pale as death. All felt that he was the bearer of some strange intelligence.

"What has happened?" demanded his father.

The affectionate fellow grasped the hand of the viscount as if to assure himself that he really beheld him safe.

"A murder has been committed!" he faltered out, at last.

"A murder!" repeated all present.

"Yes! A gentleman who travelled by the mail with us—but who, it seems, was not expected at the abbey till to-morrow—has been shot, between the lodge and the mansion, together with a servant who

accompanied him! The person just arrived was one of his lordship's grooms, sent for medical assistance."

His hearers remained gazing on each other for some time in silence. The viscount was the first to break it—which he did by recounting his meeting with Athalie at Durham, and the evident impression which his appearance had produced upon her.

"No wonder," said Goliath, with a groan of horror; "for you are the image of my dear, ill-fated lady. And I cannot help thinking—heaven forgive me if I wrong her—that the unhappy gentleman has been mistaken for you."

"And his companion for Dick!" added his father. "I see it all—the Jezebel! The measure of her infamy is complete."

Neither of the young men could speak—their hearts were too full—they sat, grasping one another by the hand, each offering up a grateful prayer for the escape of his friend.

"They will murder him!" murmured Goliath; "murder him, even here."

"Will they, by heavens!" exclaimed Captain Vernon, starting from his seat, in the violence of his indignation; "let them try it! I only wish they would! Murder him!" he repeated; they don't know the man they have to deal with—do they, boys?"

"My mother—my poor mother—in the hands of such wretches!" groaned the viscount. "Oh, release me from my promise sir! I entreat—I implore you—let me hasten to her."

"She is safe!" replied his protector, in a more collected tone; "bold and evil as they are, take my word for it, her enemies would not dare the same night to attempt a second crime—guilt is always timid. Remain till morning, for your dear mother's sake—for mine—for Annie's!" he added, in a whisper; "sleep if you can—I and Dick will watch beside you."

"And I!" said Goliath; "I feel quite fresh and strong—never was less inclined to sleep in all my life. Besides, I have letters to write, which will occupy the time."

Again the visit to the abbey was postponed; but none of the party could be persuaded to retire to rest—the events of the last few hours had too much excited them.

The lawyer and Mr. Brindley's partner, who were seated at a separate table, busied themselves in examining certain papers, conversing in whispers, and writing letters—Captain Vernon and his boys in watching the laggard movements of the dial—till the first ray of morning.

"Thank heaven," muttered Digby, as the clock of the village church struck the hour of six, "the day of retribution has arrived at last."

With daylight, all fear of treachery and danger vanished. Captain Vernon, who felt anxious to consult with Mr. Palgrave and Goliath on the best mode of proceeding, made them a sign, unperceived by Digby and Dick, to follow him into the courtyard of the inn, where they could converse without fear of interruption.

"I feel anxious for your advice, gentlemen!" he said; "I am a sailor, but little acquainted with the law, its windings, and chicaneries! No offence," he added, nodding to the lawyer. "It will be impossible to restrain Digby's natural impatience to behold his mother any longer; and even if I had the means, I should not have the heart to do so! You have the will of Nicholas Arden with you?"

"We have!"

"And it is clear?"

"Nothing can be more explicit!" replied Mr. Palgrave; "every shilling of the vast sums the Earl of Moretown has appropriated to his own use was the property of his son, and his estates are answerable! But it is one thing, my dear sir, to possess a right, and another to enforce it! The very position in which his lordship will find himself placed by this discovery may render him desperate! Any attempt to take possession of the place in all probability would be resisted—the question can only be decided by legal means."

"What, then, do you advise?"

"That my client contents himself for the present by demanding an interview with his mother—they cannot deny him that, for very shame—hold out to his father the hope of compromise: if wise he will accede to it. It is the influence of the Frenchwoman that I fear!"

"And I!" exclaimed Goliath; "she leads him like a child—thought, feeling, honour—all yield to her slightest wish! I hope ere this to have the means of crushing her; but man's justice, as well as heaven's, seems blind to her offences."

"It will reach her at last," observed the captain, with energy; "it will reach her at last."

Whilst they were thus debating, the landlord joined them, and inquired if one of his guests was not named Obie—Mr. Goliath Obie.

"It is my name," answered the goldsmith, with a look of anxiety.

The man placed a card in his hand, and informed

him that two gentlemen who had just arrived requested to see him privately.

"At last!" exclaimed the friend of Alice, as he glanced at the name; "thank heaven, they have arrived at last!"

(To be continued.)

SCIENCE.

NEW STEAMERS FOR THE THAMES.—A prospectus has just been issued by the Saloon Steam Packet Company (Limited). The company has been formed to provide a sufficient number of iron passenger steamers to conduct the traffic of the Thames. The boats will in some degree resemble the well-known "Iona" famous on the Clyde.

THE largest screw steamer ever built, with the exception of the Great Eastern, has been lately launched from the building yard of Messrs. Palmer, Jarrold. The vessel is named the Scotland. Her dimensions are as follows:—Length over all, 394 feet; length on the load line, 365 feet; breadth, extreme, 43 feet; depth of hold, 29 feet; gross tonnage, 3,691 tons. She is provided with two engines, each of 200 horse power, and capable of being worked, combined, up to 1,600 or 1,800 horse power.

THE loss and waste of power caused by the large proportion of dead weight in ordinary railway trains has led to the adoption of a steam car in America, on the Utica and Clinton Railway. The engine and carriage are placed on one frame, which runs on four pairs of wheels, arranged so as to travel over sharp curves. The cost of running is stated to be not more than one-third the cost of locomotives to do similar work. The weight, including all machinery, baggage-room, seats for 40 passengers, and coal and water for 20 miles, does not exceed 14 tons; to perform the same service with a locomotive train the weight would be about 42 tons, giving a saving of two-thirds, or 28 tons. From the satisfactory results which have been attained on the above railway, this description of car appears well adapted for short lines in this country.

THE magnesium light has just received a new application in France, in connexion with the laryngoscope, a small apparatus consisting of two mirrors by means of which the lower parts of the larynx may be conveniently brought to view. A polyus seated deeply in the throat of a patient of Dr. Fournier's, was examined by means of M. Mathieu Plessy's lamp, specially constructed for the magnesium light. Strong rays were projected on the mirror placed at the furthest end of the fauces, and thence reflected into the larynx and trachea, and these parts were depicted on the mirror, which was too small to be clearly observable at a distance. But on placing a bi-convex lens before the patient's mouth, the image became so enlarged that everyone could distinguish it from a distance of a few yards.

NAVAL AND ORDNANCE.—The Lords of the Admiralty have given direction for the construction of a new iron-cased frigate, of the improved Bellerophon class, to be named the Hercules, which is intended to mount an armament of fifteen guns of the heaviest calibre, and to be fitted with engines of 1,600 horse-power (nominal).—The 7in. wrought iron shunt gun, of 7 tons, has at length been tried at Shoeburyness, with charges of 25lb. of powder and projectiles of 100 lb. weight, and we are now enabled to judge of the value of this system of rifling as compared with the Lancaster, the French, and the Scott systems. In round numbers, at 10 deg., the shunt gun gives about 4,050 yards, as against 4,500 or 4,600 yards of the other competitive guns. The accuracy of the gun is slightly inferior to the French and other competitors.

THE Government have now determined to arm the whole of the cavalry with carbines on the breech-loading principle, and have selected the Westley Richards' arm as the arm of the service. Its weight is about 6lb., and the barrel, which is rifled on the Whitworth principle, is twenty inches in length, and is sighted up to eight hundred yards, at which distance it makes most wonderful practice. It has also a hardened projectile, which gives it greatly increased power of penetration. Two thousand of these arms are already in the hands of the troops; they are much approved, and twenty thousand more are now in course of manufacture at Enfield; they will be finished this year. Two thousand infantry muskets on the same principle are also being manufactured for the Government by the inventors, Messrs. Westley Richards and Co., of Birmingham; these will be served out to the infantry this year for an extended trial. This arm, like the carbine, is rifled on the Whitworth principle, and is sighted up to one thousand yards, at which distance it gives an average mean figure of merit under 2 feet. This principle of breech-loading and its

ammunition have been before the public for the last seven years; in the course of that time it has been thoroughly tested by the Government, and has been applied to upwards of three thousand private persons over all parts of the world for sporting and target purposes. It has become an article of consumption for which there is a steady and increasing demand, so that the Government incurs no risk of failure.

A NEW GUNPOWDER.—The explosion at Erith has led to the manufacture of a new gunpowder, the discovery of Mr. L. H. G. Ehrhardt, a German. It consists of tannic gallic acid, or the resin of commerce, and chloride or nitrate of potash. The new gunpowder is stated to be of three times the explosive force of that now in use, and one-half cheaper. It leaves no residuum when exploded. It can also be kept in magazines with safety, by the resin and preparation of potash being kept separately, and mixed as wanted, both the articles named being incombustible by themselves. If it bears the test of actual experiment a saving of one-third will be effected; and, the combustion being entire, it will remove all objections to rifled firearms, such as the fouling of Enfield rifles and Armstrong guns.

DRYING BY GAS.—To attempt to dry by combustion of gas appears to be a mistake, for in small chambers at least, where there is no ventilation, instead of evaporation, moisture is produced, and condenses upon the walls. This I have found from repeated experiments, and was much puzzled for some time by a solicitor's strong room, which I had built, obstinately refusing to become dry, although favourably situated for the process, and a jet of gas being kept burning day and night. The consequence, however, was, that the papers and parchments became flaccid and damp. The mischief has been entirely and speedily remedied by inserting two terra-cotta ventilating bricks, and extinguishing the gas. In a washing lobby, also, in one case the gas was left burning for five hours, when the paper on the walls was found to be saturated with moisture for about 1 ft. in width, at and below the level of the light, and where, as on varnished parts, it could not be absorbed; the moisture hung in great drops as if a pipe had leaked. The combustion of gas, therefore, in confined chambers produces a moist atmosphere instead of a dry one.—T. G.

THIN SHEETS OF IRON.

It may not be out of place, considering the great interest that is taken by those connected with this great branch of industry, the iron trade, to give a few curious particulars relative to the extent that iron can be rolled, and the thin sheets which can be rolled out. Brother Jonathan little thought what a hubbub would be created in the old country when from Pittsburgh he sent that wonderful letter, written on a sheet made from iron, which took no less than one thousand sheets to make one inch in thickness; the dimensions being 5½ in., or a surface of 44 in., and weighing 69 grains. The fact had no sooner made its appearance in print than Britain's sons began to work, and soon we heard of a sheet containing the same number of surface inches, but weighing only 46 grains, had been made at the Marshfield Ironworks, Llanelly, Carmarthenshire, being exactly one-third less in weight; but soon the Welsh leak had to give way to the rose of England, for Staffordshire was anxious to take its wonted lead. The Hope Iron-works succeeded in making a sheet of 118 surface inches, weighing but 89 grains; which, rolled to the American and Welsh standard of 44 in. gives about 33 grains. Messrs. B. Williams and Co., 46 in., 49 grains; reduced to the same standard, about 31 grains.

For a time Staffordshire wears the belt; but Wales becomes very restless, and is anxious for the honour of St. David, so further attempts must be made. No sooner said than done. Marshfield comes again into the field, and through the press is waited to the reader. They succeeded in making one sheet, 8 in. by 5½ in., or a surface of 44 in., of the astounding weight of 23½ grains only; which required no less than 2,853 sheets to make one inch in thickness; another sheet, 8 in. by 6 in., or forty-eight surface inches, weighed 25 grains; but, brought to the standard of 44 in., gives but 23 grains, and requires 2,950 sheets to make one inch in thickness. The Pontardawe Tinworks next come into the field with a sheet of 15½ in. by 7 five-sixteenths, or a surface of 115.17 in., weighing 60 grains; but, being reduced to 44 in., is 24½ grains—a trifle heavier than Marshfield; but Pontardawe claims 3,799 sheets to make one inch in thickness.

We now come to the climax. The mill manager of Messrs. W. Hallam and Co., of the Upper Forest Tinworks, near Swansea, has succeeded in making a sheet of the finest appearance and thinnest that has ever yet been seen by mortal eye. The iron from which the sheet was rolled was made on the premises. It was worked in a furnace with charcoal and the usual blast; afterwards taken to the hammer to be formed into a regular flat bloom; from thence conveyed to the

balling furnace, and when sufficiently heated, taken to the rolls, lengthened, and cut by shears into proper lengths, piled up, and transferred to the balling furnace again; when heated, it was passed through the rolls back again into the balling furnace, and when duly brought to the proper pitch was taken to the rolls, and made into a thorough good bar. It was then taken to the tin mills, and rolled till it was supposed to be thinner than 23 grains, afterwards passed through the cold rolls to give it the necessary polish, and now it stands on record as the thinnest sheet of sheet of iron ever rolled. The sheet in question is 10 in. by 5½ in., or 55 in. in surface, and weighs but 20 grains, which, being brought to the standard of 8 in. by 5½ in., or forty-four surface inches, is but 16 grains or 30 per cent. less than any previous effort, and requires at least 4,800 sheets to make 1 in. in thickness. That calculation is made in a rough way, without any inch gauge, but if anything, is considerably under the mark.

A sheet of 10 tin plate measures 10 in. by 14 in., or a surface of 140 in., and weighs ½ lb. A box is made up of 225 sheets, but as many as 245 can be pressed in; the depth of the box is 3½ in. The latter number of sheets being taken as our guide, we have seventy sheets to the inch. In order to make the matter more clear we will raise the 55 in. of 20 grains to the ordinary 10 in. by 14, or 140 in., the weight being 50 10-11 thin grains. We now find that ½ lb. avoirdupois contains 3,500 grains Troy weight; we now multiply 3,500 grains by 70, the number of sheets of 10 thickness to 1 in., and—by 50 10-11 thin grains, being the weight of 140 in. of the thin sheet in question, which gives us as answer 4,812½ that number, therefore, being required to make 1 in. in thickness.

I think it is brought intelligibly before your readers; I would just add that the gravity of the iron in question, from which the thin sheet was rolled, was from 7.8 to 7.9 and was not made in what is generally considered the most superior—that is, hollow fires. The plan answers admirably for tin plates, and, in the present instance, fully corroborates that view of the question, for had not the iron been of a very superior quality, it could never have stood the stretching, for it is no less than 68½ times thinner than the ordinary 10 tin-plate. Of course, in a mercantile view, it will never answer to make such thin sheet; in fact, it is hardly worth while making even taggers; and most makers of tin-plates would rather be without such orders, unless in large quantities. For the present Messrs. William Hallam and Co., of Swansea, stand at the top of the tree. We now wait to chronicle fresh efforts ere we bestow the prize medal.

CARBON.—There are a few facts connected with carbon that merit consideration. Carbonic acid gas, entering the lungs, is a deadly poison; but entering the stomach, which lies close under the lungs, and is overlapped by them, it is a refreshing beverage. Although charcoal, when burnt, gives off the most poisonous gas, it seems to be very jealous of other gaseous poisons; for if it be powdered and set about in pans where there is a poisonous atmosphere, it will seize hold of poisonous gases, and, by absorbing, imprison them. Even in a drop of toast and water the charred bread seizes hold of whatever impurities exist in the water; and water passed through beds of charcoal becomes filtered and beautifully pure, being compelled to give up to the charcoal whatever is obnoxious. If a piece of meat that has commenced putrefying be sprinkled with charcoal, it will not only object to the meat putrefying any further, but it will sweeten that which has already undergone putrefaction. Although, in the form of gas, it will poison the blood, and cause speedy stupefaction and death, if it be powdered, and worn before the mouth as a respirator, it will say to all poisonous gases that come to the mouth with the air, "I have taken this post to defend the lungs, and I arrest you on a charge of murderous intention." Such are the various facts connected with carbon; and they forcibly indicate that those who understand nature's works are likely to receive her best protection.

WRECK AND LOSS OF NEARLY SIX HUNDRED LIVES.—On the 12th of January, a Chinaman, much bruised about the body, presented himself at the Shipping Office, Singapore, and said that he had left Swatow a fortnight before in a large three-masted schooner, with 550 other passengers. On the night of the 6th, he said, at the entrance to the straits, barely thirty miles from Singapore, the vessel, going at full speed, dashed against the Lighthouse Rocks; a moment afterwards she fell back, filled rapidly, and sank in deep water, with all hands on board. The man, who believed himself the only survivor, got hold of a small piece of wood, on which he floated a whole day and night, when he was picked up by some Rhio fishermen and brought to Singapore. The story, so fearful in its details, was scarcely believed at first, but fatal con-

firmed it arrived a day afterwards from the Dutch Consul, resident at Rhio. One of the crew of the ill-fated ship, a Swede, named Christensen, was picked up and brought ashore at Rhio, and his history was the same as the Chinaman's. The vessel was the Hamburg three-masted schooner, Canton, bound from Swatow to Singapore with 550 Chinese passengers. The Chinaman that reached Singapore and the European sailor, now in hospital at Rhio, are the sole survivors.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

SOME people have the toothache; to them it may be interesting to know without a guinea fee that between the tip of the left-hand thumb and the nose there is a great connection; the nerves of the nose are connected with the mouth, and toothache may therefore be cured by the application of a mustard poultice to the tip of the left-hand thumb.

NEURALGIA.

FROM two Greek words *Neuros*, nerve, and *Algos*, pain; means nerve-pain; but as there is no pain except in connection with the nerves, every pain or ache in the body is really "neuralgia." Ailments are generally named from the part affected, or nature of the malady. "Head-ache," because the pain is in the head. "Pleuritis," or pleurisy, because there is inflammation, too much arterial blood in the *pleura*, or covering of the lungs. Neuralgia is always caused by bad blood; bad, because too poor or too much of it; too poor, because there is not exercise and pure air enough to secure a good digestion, and the person is thin and pale; too much blood, because there is more taken into the system than passes from it, and it is too full. The person may be fleshy enough, and does not appear sick at all. For a week, live on cold bread and butter, fruits, and cold water, and spend the whole of daylight in active exercise in the open air, and the neuralgia will be gone in three cases out of four—the feet being kept warm, and the whole body most perfectly clean.

There are two kinds of neuralgia, sharp and dull; both caused by there being too much blood in or about the nerve. Perhaps arterial blood gives the sharp, venous blood the dull or heavy pain. In either case, the pain is of all forms of intensity, from simple discomfort to an agony almost unendurable. In the more fleshy parts, the pain is less severe, since the soft flesh yields before the distending nerve; distended by more and more blood getting into it, until it is occasionally three times its usual size; but when the nerve is in a tooth, or between two bones, or passes through a small hole in the bone, as in the face, or "facial neuralgia," which is neuralgia proper, or the *tic douloureux* of the French, the suffering is fearful, because there is no room for distension, and every instant, the heart, by its beating, plugs more blood into the invisible blood-vessels of the nerves. But in any such case, open a blood-vessel in the arm or elsewhere, until the person is on the very point of fainting, and the most excruciating neuralgia is gone in an instant, because the heart ceases to send on blood, and the blood already in a part, as naturally, flows out of it, as water naturally flows out of an uncorked bottle, on its side. Hence, a skin kept clean by judicious washings and frictions, helps, by its open pores, to unload the system of its surplus.

There is no form of mere neuralgia, which is not safely and permanently cured in a reasonable time by strict personal cleanliness, by cooling, loosening food, as fruits, coarse bread, and cold water, and by breathing a pure air in resting in our chambers at night, and in moderate labour out of doors during the hours of daylight. Those who prefer uncertain physic or stimulants to these more natural remedies, are unwise.

HOW TO EAT.

BEFORE a man becomes hungry, watchful nature has calculated, in her way, how much nutriment the body needs, and provides as much of a liquid substance as will be necessary to prepare from the food which may be eaten that amount of sustenance which the system may require. When this is stored up, and all is ready, the sensation of hunger commences, and increases with the steadily increasing amount of the digesting material just referred to, and the very instant the first mouthful of food is swallowed, this "gastric juice" is poured out into the stomach through a thousand sluices; but no more has been prepared than was necessary, for Nature does nothing in vain; so that if a single mouthful more of food has been swallowed than the untempted or unstimulated appetite would have called for, there is no gastric juice for its solution, and it remains but to fret and worry, and irritate for hours together.

If the amount eaten is much in excess, the stomach, as if in utter discouragement at the magnitude of its task, ceases its attempts at digestion, and forthwith

commences the process of ejecting the unnatural load by means of nausea and vomiting in some cases; in others, it remains for an hour or more like a weight, a hard round ball, or a lump of lead, an uneasy heaviness; then it begins to "sour," that is, to decompose, and the disgusting gas or liquid comes up into the throat, causing more or less of a scalding sensation from the pit of the stomach to the throat; this is called "heartburn." At length, the half-decayed mixture is forced out of the mouth by the outraged stomach with that horrible odour and taste with which every glutton is familiar. In some cases the stenchy mass is passed out of the stomach downwards, causing, in its progress, a gush of liquid from all parts of the intestinal canal, to wash it, with a flood, out of the system; this is the "Diarrhoea" which surprises the gourmand at midnight or in the early morning hours, when a late or over-hearty meal has been eaten.

When sufficient food has been taken for the amount of gastric juice supplied, hunger ceases, and every mouthful swallowed after that, no gastric juice having been prepared for its dissolution, remains without any healthful change, inflaming, and irritating, and exhausting the stomach by its efforts to get rid of it, and this is the first step towards forming "dyspepsia," which becomes more and more deeply fixed by every repeated outrage, until at length it remains a lifetime worry to the mind, filling it with horrible imaginings, and a wearing wasting torture to the body, until it passes into the grave.

The moral of the article is, that the man who "forces" his food, he who eats without an inclination, and he who strives by tonics, or bitters, or wine, or other alcoholic liquors, to "get up" an appetite, is a sinner against body and soul—a virtual suicide!

FACETIE.

The difference between a suit of clothes and a law suit is this—one provides you with pockets, and the other empties them.

If a young lady has a large tract of valuable land, the young gentlemen are very apt to conclude that there are sufficient grounds for attachment.

A LADY walking on one of the wharves, asked a sailor why a ship was called "she?" "Because," said the sailor, "the rigging costs more than the hull."

THE following toast was recently proposed at a fireman's dinner, which was received with showers of applause: "The Ladies—their eyes kindle the only flame against which there is no insurance."

COUNTRY lady, approaching a facetious cabman:—"Pray, sir, are you engaged?"—"Och, bless your pretty soul, ma'am, I've been married these seven years, and have eight sprightly children!"

"WELL, wife, I don't see for my part how they send letters on them 'ere wires without tearing 'em all to bits."—"Laws me, they don't send the paper, they just send the writin'."

A GOOD JOKE of Lord Palmerston's was at one time in circulation apropos of his reported insult of the Marylebone vestry as "local tinkers."—"Oh, that's a mere error of the press—dropped a letter—I must have said 'local thinkers.'"

A CELEBRATED French player at the roulette table at Baden has discovered the secret of winning daily. He borrows three louis of his friends, risks one at play, and, if successful, pursues his game; if not successful, he leaves off, and is always two louis the richer.

ADDRESS FROM THE MANAGER OF A DUBLIN THEATRE.—"Ladies and Gentlemen,—As there is nobody here, I will dismiss you all; the performances of this night will not be performed; and the performances of this night will be repeated to-morrow evening."

"DAD, if I was to see a duck on the wing, and was to shoot it, would you thrash me?"—"Oh no, my son! It shows you are a good marksman, and I would feel proud of you."—"Well, then, dad, I plumped our old drake as he was flyin' over the fence, to-day, and it would have done you good to see him drop!"

HOW MOZART WON HIS WAGER.—The following anecdote is related in the *Memoires d'un Musicien*:—"Mozart and Haydn being at a party, the former laid a wager of six bottles of champagne with the latter that he would not play at sight a piece of music which he (Mozart) would compose. Haydn accepted the challenge, and Mozart speedily wrote down a few notes and presented them to Haydn, who, having played a prelude, exclaimed, 'How do you think I can play that?' My hands are at each extremity of the piano, and there is at the same time a note in the middle." "Does that stop you?" said Mozart, "Well, you shall see." On coming to the difficult passage, Mozart,

without stopping, struck the note in the middle of the piano with his nose, and every one burst out laughing. What made the act more ridiculous was, that Haydn had a flat nose, while Mozarts was a long one. Haydn therefore paid for the smallness of his nasal protuberance six bottles of champagne."

THE LAST NAME.

"Who are you named after?" we asked of a bright little fellow of seven years.

"My father, sir; only I have not his last name."

"How is that, my boy? I think all children have their father's last names, if no other."

"Oh! but I have not. My father's name is Edward Marsh Frazier Senior, and mine is Edward Marsh Frazier Junior."

At a table of play, the other evening, the banker Double X was thus addressed: "You have only three points, monsieur." The banker Double X replied, "No, no, four points," upon which the first speaker offered to bet him a louis about it, and was answered by Double X, "Oh, I am not certain enough to make a bet, but I give you my word of honour I have four points."

THE COMMONS TO THE RESCUE!

RISE Barnes and Streatham! Wandsworth rise,

At Wimbledon's loud summons!

We can't afford to let a Lord

Play tailor to our Commons.

The coat I'd save that Nature gave,

Though sorely torn and tattered.

The gorse gold-lace frayed off its face,

The turf's green velvet battered.

That coat though rough I would not doff,

In spite of gods and men, Sir,

To show myself, my skirts cut off,

In what is called a Spencer.

Punch.

PRACTICAL JOKES AT ETON.

PRACTICAL jokes were more common then than now, and there was perhaps an additional enjoyment of them by Keate's pupils from the certain explosion of rage which they called forth from him when discovered. This enjoyment was intense when what may be called the serious business of the school was suddenly interrupted by the disappearance of the flogging-block, an instrument of indispensable daily use, which the young Marquis of Waterford and some companions, after a 4th of June supper, had abstracted, in some mysterious manner, from that chamber of horrors known as the "Library." It was little less than sacrilege in Keate's eyes, and his wrath was terrible; but it was supposed that he soon found out the culprit, and as he was one whose escapades were to a certain degree privileged, the matter was allowed to drop.

Another young nobleman, disguised in an old gown and cocked-hat, so as to present by moonlight a passable likeness of the doctor, painted Keate's door a brilliant red one night, before the very eyes of the college watchman, who stood looking on at a respectful distance, wondering what the doctor could be at, but not questioning his right to do what he would with his own.

Amongst other forbidden indulgences in the school, Keate had thought proper to include umbrellas, which he regarded as signs of modern effeminacy. Boys are perverse; and when to the comfort of an umbrella was added the spice of unlawfulness, it became a point of honour with some of the bigger boys to carry one. The doctor harangued his own division on the subject in his bitterest style, and ended by expressing his regret to find that Eton boys had degenerated into "school-girls."

The next night a party made an expedition to the neighbouring village of Upton, took down a large board inscribed in small gilt letters, "Seminary for Young Ladies," and fixed it up over the great west entrance into the school-yard, where it met Keate's angry eyes in the morning.

He had also declared war against a fashion creeping in among the "swells" of those days of sporting-cut coats with brass buttons, which he denounced as against the statutes. One morning several boys appeared in knee-breeches extemporised out of flannel, which they defended as strictly statutable.

A THOUGHT IN THE PARK.—What an aggravating reminder—to meet your most pressing creditor driving a pair of dun ponies.—Punch.

HISTORY EPTOMISED (by Louis Napoleon).—Cesar and Boney very much like: specially Boney!—Punch.

NOTICE BY THE SPEAKER.—The gentleman who dropped his voice may hear it again by applying to any of the doorkeepers of the House of Commons.—Punch.

PARLIAMENTARY WASTE OF TIME.—Every one to his own opinion about the value of the Minutes of

Council respecting education; but at any rate those minutes do not amount to such a bore as the hours of empty jaw which the House of Commons is continually devoting to the inconclusive discussion of that tiresome subject.—Punch.

A GENUINE SUCCESS.—*Faces in the Fire.* Those of H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, the Duke of Sutherland, and Lord Richard Grosvenor, at the conflagration of Saville House.—Punch.

"AS CLEAR AS MUD."

Irish Waiter. "An' will yer 'annar have an insale kyar or an outside kyar?"

Inexperienced Saxon. "Oh, an outside car, of course; I don't want a covered conveyance; I want to see the country."

Irish Waiter. "Oh, shure, nayther of 'em is covered." (*Closing door and preparing for a luminous explanation.*) "It's this way, it is, sir. They call 'em inside kyars becase the wheels is outside, an' they call 'em outside kyars, by reason the wheels is inside!"—Punch.

A HISTORICAL PARALLEL.—Some people object to the parallel which the Imperial author of the *Life of Julius* evidently intends to draw between biographer and subject. The likeness will be more clearly seen, if the name be written—as it should be—"SEIZER"—Punch.

AN INCURABLE.

Mamma.—"Algeroon, you great silly goose, I am ashamed of you! To get into such a state about that odious little Miss Griggs! Why, she was dropping her H's all over the room!"

Algeroon.—"Was she? I only wish I'd known it; I'd have picked 'em up—and kept 'em!"—Punch.

A SOUR-GOX.—The King of Italy returns shortly to Turin, which, for a capital, behaved in anything but a capital manner recently. Fair Turin ought not to be un-ladle-like; soup-priority, in fact, is, and always should be, looked for in a Turin.—Fun.

LET NATURE ALONE.

LET Nature alone. My dears, don't torture your hair, your eyebrows, your lips. Don't dye your hair; don't paint or powder. Suppose your hair is straight, and you "doat" on curls, let it alone. Did you never stop to consider that the hand which made you could not be improved? Look at the variety displayed in the features and expressions of your friends and acquaintances—of every individual you meet. Now, if you have never taken any lessons in sketching the "human face divine," suppose we begin just here, with pen and ink.

There is a pair of straight eyebrows, and a rather pointed nose. The latter is too prominent, you think. Arch the brows, heighten the cheek-bones. Ah! have you made any improvement, even in fancy? Admit your friend's face really has a better expression than that.

But there is a young man with lank, straight hair. Curl it. Eh?—somehow he looks "fixed up"—not as natural by half as he did ten minutes ago. Well, try your skill upon that face; the eyes are too small; enlarge them then. Are you satisfied with the effect? Confess that the effect is not good—that in short, the proportions of the face are now lost. The small eyes suited the rest of the features. Here, again, try how this mouth would look were it a trifle smaller. Why, what a remarkable distortion you make with one small stroke—the lower portion of the face cannot be recognized, and its whole aspect is smirking, insignificant.

Throw away the pencil—look around you, study, think. All these odd, homely, and often seemingly disproportioned features, after all, cannot be improved. You really never viewed it in that light before.

True, some of them have glaring defects; but you are powerless to improve them, unless you alter the whole character of the face. One moment, you criticize a landscape; I have heard you; don't deny it. The foreground was too glaring, and in spite of one prevented the eye from dwelling contentedly upon the cozy scene far in the distance; the clouds were drabs; so many blotches in the sky, which was entirely too dark; and the trees had no life in them. Well, there was some truth in your harsh criticism; but you remember how quiet, how wrapt you stood before that charming little landscape of H—s? Now, does it not occur to you that H— has devoted all his time and attention to the study of Nature? How translucent his water! How warm and balmy his skies! You almost breathe the summer air in viewing one of his pictures. His hills slope naturally; his meadows swell and fall exactly as they rose and fell as you looked at the well-remembered meadow from the back door of the old homestead. Why? Because H— has only reproduced nature. He never places the

wrong tree at the edge of the stream, never makes two hills exactly, nor two clouds exactly alike. Now ask H—why a girl with natural curls should let her hair alone, instead of endeavouring to comb it straight?—why one with straight hair should tie it up in a Grecian knot?—why even the most incontrovertible red hair should not be dyed black?—why the complexion is always suited to the hair—the hair to the complexion?

My friend Griddle dyed his whiskers and moustache. He really is a humorous, jolly fellow, and now he looks like a half and half Italian and Spaniard, with a decidedly bandit, "don't-you-joke-with-me, sir," look. (His hair was always light.) My really clever, gracious, accommodating friend Hester, imagining her nose is monstrous. In vain people say to each other and themselves, "Hester is a good-looking agreeable girl—what makes her talk as if she were really disagreeably homely—why not let herself alone?" Still Hester behaves as if Nature had been unkind to her in giving her too much nose. Now, I venture to say, if she had her choice, not one nose out of a thousand would exactly please her ladyship.

By-and-bye they will come to the conclusion that there are very few ugly faces in the world—in fact, they will understand the marks of passion, the meanings of the soul betrayed in the leering or lurking eye, the really ugly things, which invariably leave ugly traces. Let them once be occupied with that thought—the idea of "improving" themselves will perhaps be forgotten. L. W.

STATISTICS.

INDIANA AND IOWA.—Indiana, which 15,000 bushels of wheat before the war, now grows 20,000,000, though she has sent to the army 124,000 men. Iowa, a younger state, having contributed 70,000 out of a total population of 700,000 has increased her improved lands from 3,445,000 acres before the war to 4,702,000 in 1862, and 4,900,000 in 1863. Her wheat produce has gone up from 8,795,000 bushels in 1862 to 14,592,000 in 1863. Her mining of coal has advanced from 72,500 bushels in 1860 to 901,858 bushels in 1863. The earnings on her railways were, in 1863, an increase of nearly 10 per cent. in twelve months of war.

THE SUPPLY OF COTTON.—We have now definite information as to the receipts of raw cotton last year. They amounted to 893,304,720lb., as compared with 669,333,264lb. in 1863, 523,973,296lb. in 1862, 1,336,984,786lb. in 1861, 1,390,938,752lb. in 1860, 1,235,989,072lb. in 1859, 1,034,342,176lb. in 1858, 969,818,896lb. in 1857, 1,023,886,304lb. in 1856, and 801,751,952lb. in 1855. The great year in the cotton trade was 1860, and if we compare 1862 with 1860 we see that the supplies declined to the extent of 666,965,456lb., while, comparing 1864 with 1862 we find a recovery of 369,331,424lb. The receipts of last year were still, however, below the level of 1860 by 497,534,320lb., although it will be seen that last year's figures were somewhat in excess of those of 1855, when no special influence depressed the imports. It is worthy of remark in connexion with this question that the exports of cotton from the United Kingdom have very greatly increased of late years, having amounted to 244,702,304lb. last year, against 211,352,496lb. in 1863, 214,714,528lb. in 1862, 238,387,920lb. in 1861, 250,339,040lb. in 1860, 175,143,136lb. in 1859, 149,609,600lb. in 1858, 131,927,600lb. in 1857, 146,660,864lb. in 1856, and 124,968,160lb. in 1855. It will be seen that the exports of cotton have very materially expanded since the ordinary course of the trade was disturbed by the unfortunate complications still prevailing across the Atlantic.

In Dublin, within the last few days, an old woman was brought before the magistrates for about the 120th time. She had been tried once by the Judges of Commission, five times before the Recorder at Sessions, and summarily convicted 105 times by the divisional magistrates; and she had spent twenty years of her life in prison.

SUGAR REFINING IN JAPAN.—One of the Japanese princes has resolved to erect a sugar refinery in Japan, and has engaged two skilled Europeans to assist him in carrying out his project, one of these being a Greenock man, who has been, for some time employed as pansman in two of the principal sugar refineries in that town. He left for his future sphere of employment a short time since, and his engagement is for three years.

COD FISHERIES.—From the official returns relative to the French ships engaged in the cod fishery in the North Sea during the year 1864, it appears that the number of cod fish taken in 1864 was less than that in 1863—the weight in 1863 being 2,240,000 kilo-

grammes, and in 1864 only 2,048,000 kilogrammes. On the other hand, the take of flat fish was double in 1864 to that of 1863. There was likewise a very remarkable increase in the quantity of seal oil brought home. It amounted to only 16,000 kilogrammes in 1863, and increased to 112,000 kilogrammes in the year 1864.

THE Chancellor of the Exchequer's prediction, that if Parliament consented to abolish the duty on paper we should see coaches made of this material, is about to be partly realized. A carriage company, under the Limited Act, has been formed at Birmingham, for the purpose of bringing into use various improvements. The most important of these is the use that will be made of paper in the construction of the vehicles. All the panels will be of the substance, or rather of *paper-muché*.

EVENING.

A TRANQUIL evening, one of those
That o'er the closing eye of day
Her starry curtain gently throws,
As the fond mother veils the ray
That shines upon her sleeping infant's eye,
While with low-murmured song she watches nigh.

With perfume stole from violet's cup—
Which, nestling low, with glances shy,
Ventured one moment to look up—
The rustling breeze comes floating by.
The tall trees shiver with delight as slip
Light, fragrant kisses from its fresh, cool lip.

The air is clear, yet dark as down
That lines the raven's brooding wing;
Stars, like some burning seraph's crown,
Flashes of golden splendour fling.
Now here, now there, now caught by laughing wave,
That hurries on, the silvery sands to lave.

But there are silences that fill
The fitful pauses of the breeze
With power the inner life to thrill,
Deeper than e'er found voice in these.
They find expression, not in starry skies,
But light the soul strikes forth from human eyes.

The throb of aspirations high—
The unvoiced longings of the breast—
Spring from that soul-thirst ne'er to die,
Till we attain the heavenly rest.
These yearnings, aspirations, all are given,
That we may plume, and try our wings for heaven.

C. O.

GEMS.

We may look coldly upon the sweetest and most gentle dew of love till it becomes snow or frost.

THERE are persons who, like an electrical body, draw others to them merely to thrust them off again.

As a man is known by his associates, so may the character of the creditor be known by his attorney: the sharp employ the sharp.

Our sweetest experiences of affection and love are meant to be suggestions of that realm which is the home of the heart.

THE wings of time are no other than two heavy bills, duly drawn and accepted. He is continually wasting the sand from his glass to dry the wet ink of promissory notes.

We are not apt to think that one of the great causes of the sadness of autumn is its silence—the absence of the birds. Is it like the wilderness, whose characteristic is also silence—the absence of man; a much deeper silence, reaching way back to the creation. Night, also, has its silence. But the greatest silence is that of the grave.

WE can learn to read and write, but we cannot learn railery; that must be a particular gift of nature; and, to tell the truth, I esteem him happy who does not wish to acquire it. The character of sarcasm is dangerous; although this quality makes those laugh whom it does not wound, it nevertheless, never procures esteem.

MISCELLANEOUS.

AND YET ANOTHER ROYAL AUTHOR.—The ex-King of Greece is compiling a dictionary of modern Greek.

The Paris journals announce that a real piece of the cross and the crown of thorns will be exhibited every Friday during Lent at Notre Dame.

A PRIVATE letter from Paris, says, that at a masked ball the other night, three men personating Julius Caesar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon I. respectively, were walking arm in arm amidst roars of laughter.

Cesar was dressed like an ancient Roman exquisite, and scratched his head with his finger. When the crowd interrupted their movements the great Roman rebuked them with humorous gravity, by saying, "Happy the people who understand and obey us; woe to those who disregard us."

ANOTHER ROYAL AUTHOR.—It is said that a discovery has been made of a MS. written by Louis XIV., the subject of which is the life of Caesar.

THE King of Sweden, it is said, has invited the Prince of Wales and Prince Napoleon to be present at the military camp of the Swedish troops which will be formed at the latter end of the summer.

It is considered that, by the aid of Rothschild and the activity of the engineers employed, the provisional line of rails to be laid over Mont Cenis will be completed, and in full operation, next February.

THE NEATEST THING IN BEGGING.—The other day a beggar called at a house in a village in the north of Scotland, and presented a begging letter, sending in along with it a very neat *carte de visite* of himself.

THE King of Sweden and his brother Oscar have a volume of poems in the press. The Empress of the French is about to publish, and the King of Bavaria is also in the press, with poetry. The age of Imperial and Royal *littérateurs* has arrived.

A FRENCH proprietor lately paid four millions of francs for a track of vine-land where Medoc was the favourite wine; and he has realized the full amount of the purchase-money from the crop of 1864 alone. This result would almost satisfy an unsuccessful petroleum speculator.

THE Museum of the Louvre has just purchased for 150,000f. payable in six years, the collection of Gallic coins formed by M. de Sauley, senator. The museum has also acquired, from M. de Laporte, consul in Egypt, various Egyptian and Babylonian pieces, for 24,000f., payable in three years.

THE LATE LORD COMBERMERE.—We understand that the post of Constable of the Tower of London, vacated by the death of Lord Viscount Combermere, is not to be re-filled. At the same time we may state that nine "good service" pensions, of £100 a-year each, are thus placed in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief.

It is stated that certain wealthy Englishmen intend to offer to purchase of the Italian Government three-fourths of the Island of Capri—one-fourth of which already belongs to Garibaldi—in order to present it to the illustrious general. The value of the property is estimated at from sixty to eighty thousand lire (about £2,000 or £3,000).

THE Duke of Saxe-Coburg has originated a new title, and bestowed it upon Mr. Otto Janke, of Berlin, as a reward for his numerous cheap editions of standard German works. The title is "Commerzienrath" (Merchant-Councillor), and is not only applicable to publishers, but to any class of traders who benefit the public by the production of high-class articles at low prices.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF MUSIC.

It communicates to the body shocks which agitate the members to their base. In churches the flame of the candle oscillates to the quake of the organ. A powerful orchestra near a sheet of water ruffles its surface. A learned traveller speaks of an iron ring which swings to and fro to the sound of the Tivoli Falls. In Switzerland I excited, at will, in a poor child afflicted with a frightful nervous malady, hysterical and cataleptic crises, by playing on the minor key of E flat. The celebrated Dr. Bortier asserts that the sound of a drum gives him the colic. Certain medical men state that the sound of the trumpet quickens the pulse and induces slight perspiration. The sound of the bassoon is cold; the notes of the French horn at a distance, and of the harp are voluptuous. The flute played softly in the middle register calms the nerves. The low notes of the piano frighten children.

Once had a dog who would generally sleep on hearing music, but the moment I played in the minor key he would bark piteously. The dog of a celebrated singer whom I knew would moan bitterly, and give signs of violent suffering, the instant his mistress chanted a chromatic gamut.

A certain cord produces on my own sense of hearing the same effect as the heliotrope on my sense of smell and the pineapple on my sense of taste. Rachel's voice delighted the ear by its ring before one had time to seize what was said, or appreciate the purity of her diction.

We may affirm, then, that musical sound, rhythmic or not, agitates the whole physical frame, quickens the pulse, incites perspiration, and produces a pleasant momentary irritation of the whole nervous system.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

L. JAMES.—Your request will be complied with.
A. C. R.—A work on the Art of Stuffing Birds may be obtained by order of any bookseller.
SUBSCRIBER FROM BECKING.—Your question was answered by anticipation in No. 96. (See reply to T. F.)
JAMES D.—The lines entitled "A Farewell," &c., are declined with thanks.
CAUTION ONE.—A written will, properly signed at the foot by the testator, and duly attested by two witnesses, is legal.
R. G.—Twenty-one years of age, tall and dark, would be glad to correspond, with a view to matrimony, with a young lady who is thoroughly domesticated.
HENRY T.—Would be glad to receive a matrimonial introduction to a lady. Is very respectable, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, of light complexion, good tempered, and of domestic habits.
ALBERT.—The handwriting is tolerably good. (The subject of the second question is always a matter of private arrangement.)
H. J.—We do not publish the names and addresses of professional men or tradesmen. All such information is afforded in the Post Office Directory.
J. M. R.—The name of the blind Thessalian flower-girl in Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii" is Nydia. (The handwriting, though peculiar, is ladylike.)
VICTORIA R.—The name Caroline is the feminine of Charles, the Latin of Charles, and means noble-spirited. The handwriting is of very fair average merit.
T. G. W. P.—The stanzas entitled "The Dying Sailor Boy" are not quite suitable to our columns, though they possess considerable merit.
E. G. R.—You will find the desired local information in any handbook to Margate. Handwriting needs careful practice.
C. O. N.—If you place shreds of silk, in the form of a tassel, in a jar of oxygen, they will burn like paper; and copper and tin may be burnt at a small charcoal furnace.
CHRY.—When a lady, after dancing, does not wish to accept refreshment offered by a gentleman, she need only say that she begs to decline, or use any other simple form of negative.
X. O.—When a lady is not engaged, she wears a hoop or diamond ring on her first finger; if engaged, on the second; if married, on the third; and on the fourth if she intends to remain single.
S. A. B.—Is anxious to form a matrimonial alliance with a gentleman of respectable appearance. Is twenty-one years of age, with dark hair and eyes, fair complexion, medium height, of respectable family, and well educated.
A. S. SPALDING.—All the numbers of the 7 DRAKS JOURNAL and THE LONDON READER can be obtained on application to the publisher, or by order through any newsagent. There were 36 numbers of the former issued.
LENNET.—A good powder for cleansing and preserving the teeth is made thus:—Rose pink, two drachms; precipitated chalk, twelve drachms; carbonate of magnesia, one drachm; gummo (sulphate), six grains.
LILY VICTORIA.—who is twenty years of age, a blonde, with light hair and eyes, 5 ft. in height, and twenty-one years of age, would like to correspond matrimonially with a handsome young gentleman, of fair complexion, and a banker by profession. *Carte de visite* required.
INQUIRER.—In all cutaneous eruptions the following is very useful:—Ipecacuanha wine, four drachms; flower of sulphur, two drachms; tincture of cardamom, one ounce. Mix, and take one teaspoonful three times a day in water. Excesses in diet should be avoided.
T. M. M.—who is twenty-two years of age, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, dark complexioned, good-looking, and educated, is anxious to meet with a lady who realizes his "ideal" of a wife, who must be dark complexioned, affectionate, fond of music, and have a small fortune.
EX. SP. H.—The word coin means simply money struck on the coin or head of the flattened metal; by which term coin or head is to be understood the obverse, the only side which originally bore any stamp. Hence the Latin *causis*, from *causis*, or *lyn*, the head. (The handwriting is good.)
J. W.—It is a mistake to suppose that water, because it contains animalcules or conferva, is necessarily unwholesome. However repugnant it may be to use water containing these, it is only when they are dead that danger arises from their presence.
J. W. F.—The first diamond discovered in Russia was in July, 1829, by Humboldt and Ross, when on their journey to Siberia, on the west side of the Uralian mountains, in the gold-washing establishments of Krestowodskisheuski, belonging to Count Schuchwalow.
FORWARD.—The following are the proportions of the composition used for tipping the best quality of English matches:—Gum glue, 2 parts, broken into small pieces, and soaked in water till quite soft, is added to water 4 parts, and heated by means of a water bath until it is quite fluid, and at a temperature of 200 to 210 degrees Fahr. The vessel is then removed from the fire, and phosphorus, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 parts added gradually, the mixture being agitated briskly and continuously with a "stirrer" having wooden pegs or bristles at the lower end. When a uniform emulsion is obtained, chlorate

of potassa, 4 to 5 parts, powdered glass, 3 to 4 parts, and red lead, snail, or other colouring matter, a sufficient quantity (all finely powdered) are added, one at a time, to prevent accidents, and the stirring continued until the mixture is comparatively cool. The matches tipped with this, light with a snappy snap. (The mixture used for tipping the "Safety Matches" is patented.)

MATILDA M.—The Pomade d'Hibb, for the removal of wrinkles, is made thus:—To white wax 1 oz., melted by a gentle heat, add of the juice of lily bulbs and Narbonne honey, each 2 oz., rose water, 2 drachms, otto of roses, 2 drops. Apply night and morning.

GRACE and **EDITH** would like to correspond and exchange *cartes* with two gentlemen wishing to marry. "Grace" is eighteen years of age, very fair, with light hair, and laughing blue eyes. "Edith" is seventeen years of age, also fair, with golden hair, and large, expressive gray eyes. Both are considered very pretty, and fully domesticated.

D. C., who is about thirty years of age, fair complexion, and considered good-looking, and established in business in Ireland, wishes to be introduced to a young lady of Protestant principles, not above twenty-three years of age, who must be good-looking, accomplished, and possessed of a small fortune.

JULIET.—To become an accomplished actress is a position to which only very few attain. It is never won without the possession of great natural ability and considerable physical advantages, with sedulous devotion to the profession. The first step is, of course, to learn the art of elocution, in which instruction can be readily obtained.

WILF ROSE, who is seventeen years of age, with brown hair, and gray eyes rather *petite*, and very fond of all kinds of active amusements, would be glad to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with a gentleman, who must be good-looking, have early hair, be from twenty to twenty-two years of age, not very tall, have a nice income, and belong to either the military or naval profession.

NEVER FORGOTTEN.

When forms of beauty round these press,
 Thy senses all beguiling.

And sparkling eyes and ruby lips
 Gather around these smiling—

Oh, not in such an hour as that,
 When pleasures all beset thee.

Would I implore a thought for one
 Who never can forget thee.

There may be gayer hearts than mine,
 And eyes whose gaze is brighter;

There may be those whose smiles of love
 May make thy heart feel lighter—

Yet well I know, though far away,
 Thou ever wilt regret me.

And in thy soul, thou knowest well,
 I never shall forget thee.

CLASSICS, who is twenty-one years of age, good-looking, dark, and of moderate height, affectionate in disposition, and steady in habits, desires to meet with a lady about eighteen years of age, pretty, highly respectable, and of a lively disposition, as a partner for life. Money no object, as "Classics" possesses a moderate income; but exchange of *cartes de visite* desirable.

NELLY CLIFTON is desirous of receiving a matrimonial introduction to a gentleman who is dark and tall—though not of such great stature as "R. B. T. B." (whose Brobdignagian height, we may state, *per se*, is not a recommendation, but a recommendation, was a printer's error). "Nelly" is twenty-two years of age, and tall, has Auburn hair, is extremely pretty, and moves in good society, can play well, and is considered to possess a good voice.

INQUIRER.—We are not acquainted with the composition of the pomade in question, and think the designation which you give it is probably incorrect. The following, however, are the ingredients of a pomade which is much esteemed, and is equal in efficacy to Macassar oil:—Taste castor oil, 5 oz.; white wax, 1 oz.; alkanet root, $\frac{1}{2}$ drachm; put them together until sufficiently coloured, then strain, and add oil of origanum and oil of rosemary, of each 1 drachm; oil of nutmeg, $\frac{1}{2}$ drachm; otto of roses, 10 drops.

L. S. H.—Marriage in the church porch was an old custom, long since, however, fallen into disuse. By an old law, only before the face of all, and at the door of the church could the marriage dower be legally assigned. The custom is alluded to by Chaucer in his *Life of Bath*:

"She was a worthy woman all her live;
 Husbands at the church door had her five."

J. G. M.—The origin of hot cross-buns on Good Friday dates far back into antiquity; the cross itself being a sacred symbol of the old Egyptians, and the word bun being derived from the early Greeks, who so called a sacred cake which they offered to their deities. The practice was followed, and, of course, modified, by the early Christians; the buns, or loaves, being made of the consecrated dough whence the "host" was taken, and given by the priests to the people. These loaves or buns were marked with a cross, as the present Good Friday buns are.

FLORENCE.—The dress of the Roman period in Britain consisted for the male sex of the tunic, worn next the skin, and the toga, though sometimes more than one tunic was worn, and a pallium or mantle thrown over it. The tunics for males did not reach below the knees; that for females reached to the feet, and over it they wore a mantle. These dresses consisted of little more than pieces of cloth, linen, or silk, with fringes or borders, wrapped loosely round the body, and fastened with bone pins, &c. The costume of the period of Alfred the Great was not greatly dissimilar.

W. B. C.—The following is the process in dyeing woollen tissues scarlet: Three quarters of a pint of a tin mordant (made by dissolving three pounds of tin in sixty pounds of hydrochloric acid) is added to every pound of lac dye, and digested for six hours. To dye, say twenty-five pounds of cloth, a tin boiler of 75 gallons should be filled very nearly with water, and the heat raised to 150 degrees Fahr. Then half a handful of bean is thrown into it, the froth skimmed off, the liquid made to boil, and two pounds and three quarters of lac dye (previously mixed with a pound and three quarters of the solvent, and fourteen ounces of the tin solution) is added to it. Immediately afterwards two pounds, and three quarters of tartar, and a pound of ground sumach, both tied in a linen bag, are to be placed in it, and held

suspended for five minutes. The fire being withdrawn, five gallons of cold water and two pints and three quarters of tin mordant being poured in, the cloth is immersed. The fire is then replaced, and the liquid made to boil rapidly for an hour, when the fabric is removed and washed in pure water.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—

F. C. would be very happy to hear further from "J. R." with a view to matrimony.

S. A. H., who is twenty years of age, will be glad to exchange *cartes*, if "W. G. F." will take the initiative.

E. B. would be glad to correspond matrimonially with "Clara M. P." Is twenty-one years of age, tall, dark, and considered very good-looking.

MAUD will be glad to hear matrimonially from "A. S." Is very fair, has blue eyes, and is very good-looking and lady-like.

ETHEL wishes to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with "W. A. W." Is twenty years of age, and 5 ft. 7 in. in height.

CLARA H. is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with "W. W." Is twenty years of age, tall, with dark hair and blue eyes.

A. B. C. would be happy to correspond with "Willis Lister" matrimonially. Is seventeen years of age, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, of a rather misanthropic disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

FLORENCE will be happy to correspond matrimonially with "Frank" Is highly respectable, twenty-one years of age, of dark complexion, gentle and ladylike in manner, and possessed of a good temper.

MISSE wishes to correspond with "J. M." (whose *carte* is requested, with a view to matrimony. Is 5 ft. in height, considered very pretty, has dark hair and blue eyes, and is twenty years of age.

W. H. a gentleman by birth and education, engaged in a City bank, aged twenty-four, 5 ft. 6 in. in height, would be happy to open a matrimonial correspondence with "Lizzie."

E. L., who is nineteen years of age, 5 ft. 4 in. in height, would not object to open a matrimonial correspondence with either "E. F." or "Arthur T. P." on receiving *carte de visite*.

E. M. would be glad to hear further from, and exchange *cartes de visite* with, "Don Henry." Is five-and-twenty years of age, 5 ft. 3 in. in height, with dark gray eyes, and brown hair, and is thoroughly domesticated.

MOXA will be most happy to exchange *cartes* with "A. S." with a view to entering the estate of matrimony, but declines to oblige him with a preliminary or elaborate description of personal appearance.

EVA LINDBR is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with "J. R." Is twenty-one years of age, has light brown hair, and laughing eyes, is affectionate in disposition, and thoroughly domesticated.

ALICE and **ROSE**, who are sisters, the former twenty years of age, and the latter eighteen, of fair complexion, pretty, and of respectable family, wish to correspond matrimonially with "K." and "M."

LEO, who is eighteen years of age, 5 ft. 2 in. in height, of slender figure, ladylike in appearance, with blue eyes, fair complexion, and curling flaxen hair, will be happy to correspond matrimonially with "A. S." after preliminary receipt of *carte de visite*.

HORACE NETLEY will be very happy to correspond matrimonially with "A. E. W." Is twenty-four years of age, tall, and good-looking, with dark hair and eyes, and mustache, and is proprietor of two large drapery establishments.

IN RAINSET wishes to open a matrimonial correspondence and exchange *cartes* with "Young Widow." (No. 50) possessing all the qualifications specified, and, in addition, a most genial disposition, with a taste for music and singing.

EXCELSIOR wishes to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "L. B." with a view to matrimony. Is under thirty years of age, 5 ft. 10 in. in height, good-tempered, good-looking, and dark, with handsome moustache and beard, is fond of music, and has an income of £200 a year.

FANNY will have no objection to enter into a matrimonial correspondence and exchange *cartes* with "W. H. P." Is 5 ft. 7 in. in height, has dark hair and complexion, is twenty-one years of age, of a very respectable family, well-educated, and very fond of music.

E. R., who is eighteen years of age, *petite*, and fair, has received a thorough English education, and is the daughter of a highly respectable tradesman, would like to correspond and exchange *cartes* with "A. S." with a view to matrimony.

NOVELLA would be glad to exchange *cartes* and correspond matrimonially with "W. H. F." who so candidly avows his remarkable preference for a plain face. "Novella" is tall, has a good figure, with dark brown hair and eyes, possesses a good home, and some property, and moves in very good society.

ARTHUR VAUGHAN is desirous of corresponding matrimonially with "L. B." Is twenty-seven years of age, tall, with dark hair and eyes, black whiskers and moustache, is a surgeon by profession, having a large practice at the West End, and has a private income derived from property.

FLORENCE, being of a rather romantic disposition, would be happy to correspond matrimonially and exchange *cartes* with "Canadian." Is 5 ft. 3 in. in height, has dark hair and eyes, is prepossessing in appearance, can play well on the piano, and sing, and would be able to adorn and grace a drawing-room, as well as being thoroughly competent to manage all domestic duties.

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